Encounter

November 1975 50p

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ALTERNATIVE TO STARVATION

Jonathan Power

Despair, Dogma and Hope in the Third World

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Adolf Muschg

The Scythe Hand

PERHAPS THE COURT of Enquiry is not aware that with my late wife Elisabeth I farmed for 15 years at Frogs' Well and was of good repute there, had enough to live on, too, until the same burned to the ground for dubious reasons in the year 1951 with our son Christian, aged two at that time, and I also lost all our livestock, as well as vehicles, because the fire spread too fast and the fire brigade did not arrive in time. Frogs' Well had been in the family for more than a century, and my grandfather farmed it to everyone's satisfaction in his time. Consequently my father, deceased, was even elected to the School Board, and I take the liberty of mentioning that I was able to attend the Secondary School at Krummbach, because my mother, deceased, skimped no sacrifice. Water could have been drawn from the hydrant by the well, but the fire chief insisted on his view that this was frozen over, which was quite correct, but all that was needed was to break the thin ice. So more than one hour passed before the hose was laid across from Hasenrain, and the main building too could not be saved. The death of Christian gave rise to many ugly rumours, although he was quite small and we had always looked after him well. That was a great blow to us at the time. Since the indemnity was never adequate and at first we were housed at Shady Bank, that too gave rise to sharp friction, and my dear wife survived it only for one year, because she had caught cold during the conflagration, which turned out to be cancer. That also is a cause of great distress to us, when everyone knew that we used to manage well and had been punished enough as it was, and had paid our ground-rent regularly. But the indemnity was reduced out of malice, and the operation cost 5,000 francs, which I could hardly raise, and it became too much for the farmeress at Shady Bank, because of my daughters, although Lina was already 22 and gave a hand everywhere, as I did in the field, while they said that I scared the cows and therefore must not milk them. It wasn't Barbara's fault that she was only three years old, though she did cause a lot of work in which as a man I could not assist enough, and the farmeress at Shady Bank was herself expecting. So we had to move out and take out a lease for Torgel Alp from the municipality, for which I had reason to be grateful too, because the previous tenant had caught his death there after running down the farm and hanging himself. The place was too lonely for him as well.

So up on Torgel Alp nothing had been done for years, but Lina and I got the homestead back into working order, and we succeeded, too, in bringing up Barbara satisfactorily, so that she kept her health. Only her way to school was so long that in winter she could not always manage it, so that she fell behind and lost much joy, even though I cleared the track each morning and this wasn't even laid down in the contract.

I CLEARED THE ROAD as far as the dairy farm, but didn't hang about there, nor in the village, because of the people, not even to collect money owing for milk. If that gave rise to new rumours, that's typical, but the real trouble was the great remoteness of the homestead, which often set in as early as mid-October because of snow.

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Also, I had to go over completely to dairy farming, which I should not have dreamed of doing at Frogs' Well, but carried out in the teeth of all sorts of obstacles.

Also, the ground-rent was so high that with the best will in the world we had to borrow again. At first I had the good luck to be able to graze 15–20 bullocks, privately, but then for no evident reason the number decreased, although I only asked for my due, the bullocks returned to the valley in good condition, too, but I never stayed there long enough to forestall the rumours. Furthermore, my older daughter Lina was often sick, which did not affect the running of the farm, since I kept her at her work and exertions all the same, and our younger one had had to learn early on to help her sister, even though this kept her away from school. I must add that Lina was a strong support for me without words and despite the pain she had in her belly, and would be still if she hadn't been taken into care now, for which she is not to blame, and I only hope that now she is receiving medical attention, because she has earned it. It was a blow to us when the municipality would send no more bullocks for grazing because of irregularities that were completely unfounded, or that were due only to all the special circumstances there, and because I didn't spend all my time defending myself, so that I was thrown back on my meagre resources.

Sheer slander it was, their saying that I was out of my mind, only because I could no longer control a twitching in my cheek, and I'm sure that caused no inconvenience to anyone, but never allowed a bad word to cross my lips, as the Vicar can testify, as long as he came to see us, that is, for he stopped, as everyone knows, until it was too late. When people wouldn't look at me because of the twitch, I sent Barbara out with the milk, which would have done her no harm, I'm sure, and she only bought the most necessary things at the shop, because we couldn't afford more in any case, and if she sometimes stayed for a while it was only because she had to wait and other people can afford more than they could in my time.

And if they say my milk wasn't 100%, no one has proved that and none of those gentlemen saw how I looked after my cattle, they always got fed before we did, and as for sick cows, I had no telephone to report such a case if it occurred, so that the vet could get there in time, even though a jeep was put at his disposal by the municipality.

I TOO AM A MEMBER of the municipality, but that doesn't mean that my daughters can simply be taken into care, only because they aren't to blame for anything. It is always being said, too, that I ceased to go to church or to confession, but there I should like you to consider that I should have gone when the trouble started, but it was too far away, and so we had to cope with the trouble on our own. If that is sin, my daughters couldn't help it, and you gentlemen of the Court should admit it, because of their youth for one thing, because of their poverty for another, and you should take into account that, given all those things, Barbara may have been a bit backward. Nevertheless, when it had happened, no sort of deterioration took place in the household, no, it improved if anything, since at last we lived together in peace and could raise the ground-rent for once, which was like a miracle, and I thanked God for it, until the Vicar arrived and, after him, the Justice of the Peace, all because of the slander. For it is my opinion that if you leave a family alone for so long you must allow them to solve their problems in their own way. But since she has been taken into care now, I don't want to stand in the way of my daughter's happiness, only hope that this is what's in question, not somebody's profit because my daughter has learnt how to work, and I also request that there shall be no recriminations, because I did not corrupt her, although, as you know, unlawful acts did take place. These were only for the sake of peace, as Lina can confirm if she likes, and I forgive her in my heart, she must not fret because she got me into prison, for that was our fate, it seems, and that's all there is to it. So I will thank God that she came down from Torgel Alp, and beg the honourable Court only for some attention to her, so that she survives. I was fond of her, there's no getting away from it, and consequently could not do otherwise, and wouldn't know today what to do. And even my late wife would have had no objection, I know that, when I had the privilege to know her kind heart for 24 years, and she was glad, too, to be blessed with late

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children, first Barbara, then Christian who stayed behind in the fire. That is why, too, she departed this life and left the family to their own devices, that was a bit much all at once, when on top of it you are penalised and have to move to Torgel Alp. If my older daughter Lina hadn't taken after her late mother, hadn't been the split image of her, I don't know what would have become of us up there.

One should not forget, though, that a girl has other thoughts in her head beyond housekeeping, even an older girl.

In any case Lina was no longer ill when you separated us, that may not have suited the Rev. Vicar, because his mind boggled, but then he was clerical and past the age when a person is tormented.

But should Lina now be ailing once more, then it's those people who did that to her, for my daughter has a strong constitution and recovers every time she is needed. I myself couldn't know—could I?—that at 57 I should be tormented again, and it was a cold morning too. I was about to go out and feed the cows, and I noticed that she hadn't lit the fire, but the kitchen was empty, and your breath froze in front of your nose. I was startled, dear Court of Enquiry, for I can only say that nothing like that had happened in 10 years, even when she did have a bellyache she'd drag herself downstairs and put the coffee on the stove. All the windows were covered in frost, and the place quiet as a churchyard, that's where she ought to have appeared to me, for it hadn't been as quiet as that since the death of my wife. But this didn't occur to me at that instant, I can promise you, it didn't come over me till later.

WENT UPSTAIRS to the bedroom, the little one was still asleep, for we'd always let her sleep when it was too cold, and there was only a little boxroom for her, but a warm bed, there she was cosiest, why take her anywhere else. My only thought was that there could be one fewer of us again, and that made me shake with fear, I never so much as knocked on Lina's door but tore it open. I only write this much so that you will know the circumstances, not so that you'll come to dirty conclusions again. For there in the cold bedroom my wife sat in her shift, her bare shift, honourable Court of Enquiry, never turned her head but went on as before, leaning forward a little, so as to see herself in the mirror, only a small one it was, and passed the brush over her hair. But she did that so slowly that this slowness, together with the mere shift and the breath clouding the mirror, so that she had to wipe it clear with her free hand, all this cut into my heart and made me feel quite faint, I can't describe it, when my wife had been dead all those years. What are you doing, I asked, why don't you stop, or you'll catch cold. She said, without turning round: Why not, she said, quite calm and funny. Later she said she had dreamed of her mother, and only then, I promise you, I remembered that I too had dreamed of her mother, but by then it was too late.

As long as I stood there, by the door, I saw only that she didn't so much as turn round and, in consequence, that her hair had already turned grey in places. You should bear in mind that Lina was not quite 37, which is normal, save that as her father I had never paid attention to it, also the cold, and that the shock had left me in an abnormal state of mind. That is why everything happened so fast that I can't recall how it came about, I didn't lie about that, even though you want to know the exact details, but what's the use of them now. On my honour and salvation, all I know is that suddenly I felt relieved and Lina's face, with a rosy and languid look she hadn't had since her childhood, lay beside me on the pillow, and the two of us breathed. I am sorry I cannot tell you more, save that it happened, and that was all, and you are grown-up people after all, nor was I aware of the illegality of the act at that moment, but it wasn't my age, on the contrary, 57 doesn't amount to old age. I wish it did. Next item, I went to feed the animals, and when I returned Lina was at the stove as usual, humming a tune, and the coffee was already made. That's how it went till the evening, save that I couldn't get to sleep and was cruelly tormented. I drank several glasses of brandy, fill yourself up, I said to myself, and you won't feel so sore about it. But this was not the case, the whole mood of the place was changed, too, like at Christmas, for which reason I retired for self-abuse, as in all the previous years,

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when tormented. The mood would not leave me, though, but you must not think that this happened often, I'd been tormented daily only in the 4 or 5 years after my wife's death, then once a month perhaps, and then it stopped completely and I lived like a decent widower. I said to myself, what's up, then, you have no right to any Christmas any more, have you, you aren't even sleepy, and so I took a walk over to the cattle, which nearly always helped.

Although by then I had only two cows of my own and six goats, and your breath froze on your nose, I got into a sweat as soon as I so much as looked at them, though I'd seen the same thing 1,000 times if I'd seen it once, and they turned their heads to look at me, too, as though they wanted to do something to me, as though bewitched, so that I went out again and on and on through the snow, as far as the place where I took it into my head to lie down, thinking that will make you feel better. But then in the cold it struck me that my daughters wouldn't be able to raise the money for my funeral, but would be exposed to mockery, though behind hands held to the face as usual, I didn't want them to suffer that, couldn't get my daughters out of my mind at all, but not in the way you think, and I got up again. So I suddenly found myself back at the homestead, must have walked in a semi-circle, that happens in snow. It wasn't my own homestead either, I'd always known that, but when you're tired and the above has occurred, you see things as though for the first time. So I stood like a stranger in front of this homestead and no longer knew what was what, was afraid to go in. I thought, something will happen of itself if you stand here long enough, sooner or later the music will stop, for I had heard music all that night, and the stars were out, it was getting colder fast, near dawn. But because the snow itself made everything bright I saw that a window upstairs was open, please, my God, don't, I said to that, but nothing helped, so I called out, shut it, then, shut it, you pig, yes, that's what I called out, but don't know whether she heard me, my voice was feeble too, and all remained as it was.

If I turned my head a bit I could see it more clearly, but still couldn't tell for certain what, if I looked at it straight it was there at one moment, gone the next, but it was something white all the time.

A MAN WANTS TO KNOW, gentlemen, whether someone his own is standing so long at an open window in such a frost and catching her death of it, so I went inside and upstairs, but it wasn't the torment, when I couldn't even feel my own feet. In Lina's bedroom everything was open, and the window too, but no one was standing there, and I began to fear what she might have done to herself. Stretched out my hand, I did, to where it was darkest, for that's where the bed was, till I felt something warm, something alive, that was there. Said, thank God for that, without her being able to hear me, because she was under the cover and I wanted to comfort her. But she held on to my hand and said, come on, then, you idiot, you chicken, she said it quite clearly, and I responded to it, because I suddenly lost all consciousness of myself, and it must have happened for the second time, for suddenly there was peace again and no music any more. You must not hold that chicken against my daughter, it was clearly meant to be a sort of joke. I had called out pig, too, and hadn't meant it. You can call that sin, but there was this cold all the time, and I'm no chicken I'm sorry to say, so I stayed till it was warm. No one thanks you, anyway, for suffering the cold, and the need is too great to be forgiven us, as the Vicar said, whether we live as husband and wife now or not.

AFTER THAT LINA was cured of her bellyache, we were kinder to each other too, and took good care of each other, and that year I could pay off my ground-rent in time, because a blessing had been put on it. Was able to buy two more cows and have all four served, and they produced cow calves and got a prize a year later, which was made possible because the judges at Krummbach didn't know so much about my situation, and it became evident that without prejudice I could manage well, received a loan from the Small Farmers' Assistance too, which enabled me to have the roof re-thatched and to build a long-needed reservoir, but created more bad blood in the village. For, High Court of Justice, it is true, on my oath, that one can stand on one's head, bad blood can't be made any better, especially if the village is small.

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It is also true that I could have a new dress bought for each of my daughters, which nowadays is no luxury even in remote places, and I waited till the sales for that and certainly did not live in splendour and affluence. When we only had just enough for us to get used to our state of affairs.

As for me, I can only add that since the death of my lamented wife I had never lived in a family, but this was now the case more than ever. My younger daughter caught me singing, too, as I whitewashed the cowshed. That was more than I deserved, I'm sure, and I give all the credit for it to my dear daughters.

After finishing her school years Barbara did not want to take any employment, since she'd had enough teasing, the spasms in her face grew more violent too, which she must have inherited, though in myself I was not always aware of them. The vet couldn't find a good reason for them either, save that they were nervous, though I should have paid him to the last penny for his pills. So it came about that Barbara stayed with us, nor expressed any desire for an apprenticeship, which I should certainly have let her have, never wanting to deprive my daughters of anything, since I am fond of them both, though not in the way you think. Nor did I know that in the shed she was subject to regular molestation by the scythe hand, that Fülleman who is well known to you, who took advantage of her extremity, because she never said anything about it in public, perhaps thinking we had enough trouble already. It would have been better if she had, though, for in that case I should have bashed in the scythe hand's skull without qualms. What I am charged with, though, because the scythe hand got it out of her, that was quite different from the gossip it gave rise to, the reason why I am now in prison. Because I was fond of my daughter, and concerned about her health, about which I knew no better when even a vet wouldn't take the trouble, I couldn't resist, but I never implanted any pride in her on that score, so that she would go and boast to the scythe hand about something that certainly happened as an emergency measure and under the stress of too much molestation, when she was still half a child, as she is to this day.

For, High Court of Justice, you wouldn't have done any different either if your daughter had begged for it so urgently and you couldn't bear to see her suffer, only because the girl doesn't know the facts of life, but was physically mature and plagued by it, again because of the remoteness of the homestead, which could happen only up on Torgel Alp. Our Frogs' Well was burnt down, as you know, my wife departed and I alone with the girls, of whom one was now 37, the other 21, a great gap, but not with regard to the female body, that makes it hard to show no love when Lina is better all at once, but the younger one sleeps just behind the thin partition and is tormented in her fashion.

Since she slept lightly I wanted to relieve her of that, there was no other motive, and the longer it went on the less anyone thought anything of it, if the scythe hand hadn't got it out of her, I bet he had his reasons. And if it is said that she burst into tears, I'd like to have seen you if as half a child still you'd got under the scythe hand, and that wasn't till 7 months later, the tears too came because of the Vicar, who got there late enough, it had never happened with me.

RATHER THE FACTS of the case were as follows, my younger daughter came to me in the spring, complaining that I didn't esteem her, because Lina was privileged, and she was only her sister. At first I dismissed that, till my younger girl went to bed ill and wouldn't get up again, the twitches in her face got so bad, too, that mine broke out again and I feared for her sanity, and she sang so loud when I was with Lina that I thought a sow was being stuck, but she never dared come in, because she was a decent girl. In March, though, she developed such a bellyache that I thought, Oh, hell, maybe it would be better for you to give her peace, talked about it with Lina, who'd turned into a real housewife. But it isn't true that she advised me to do it, she only knew, what must be, must be. So, when Lina had gone to the road house with the milk, I took Barbara a jug of milk warm from the cow to her bedroom, since I had to take everything up to her, which became troublesome, and it was March 23rd. She grabbed hold of my hand at once so that I could feel if there wasn't a swelling there, and when I felt her she started that cruel screaming again,

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as well as spasms which ran visibly across her whole body, and I felt so sorry for her that I couldn't help myself but allowed what followed to occur. Then she got up quite amiable and smiled like a rogue, but I was too fond of my daughter to bear her any grudge, only begged her sincerely never to let it happen again. Whereupon she quite easily drank the milk which she had pushed far away from her before, then went quite sensibly to the kitchen and prepared an evening meal, which she hadn't done for a long time, indeed started cooking and frying so much that I got alarmed and we fed well that evening, in great obliviousness even drank brandy till it gave rise to new acts, and I was even the instigator, which I would beg to have taken into account today in my daughters' favour. That was March 23rd. For I must add that because of constant physical labour I am still full of sap, quite unexpectedly, nor knew any remedy for it till Lina took the matter into her hands, but this occurred with good will on both sides, like the relations with my younger daughter, which I did not need any more, as you will understand.

But let the respected Court tell me of a way to help a poor person like Barbara out of her predicament, when the partition is thin and there's no prospect of her finding a suitable man, when already at school she couldn't keep up, but only because of Torgel Alp, where one couldn't make a secret of our situation, as other people do. For, dear Court, poverty had come first, I must say that quite plainly, and poverty brings many troubles in its train, of which one can relieve only the most pressing, if no one else offers any help.

It would have been the first time I preferred one daughter to the other, that is why I had to take her on in turn, not because I was tormented. After that all went smoothly in our house, you can ask anyone, and if it was a sin and no one wants to have anything to do with us now, I do beseech you not to make too great an issue of our sexl. intercourse, for neither did we, but peace was the main thing, and we did not disturb anyone, but were never bedded on roses. And I assure you that the abomination was no unmitigated pleasure, a thing that is quite unknown on Torgel Alp, but only a kind of comfort.

EARLIER ON we did have a conscience about it, but that ceased because my daughters no longer suffered from a bellyache, and this was better than a deal of worrying about it and even made us quite merry at times in the winter. There are always people who talk about their conscience but don't tell a man all the same what's to be done against the cold or against pains, at least nobody told us. When the Vicar arrived at last we no longer expected him and didn't really know what to do about it, and nor did he. For he walked up quite slowly, Lina saw him from a long way off, and she said, O my God. So, when he could think of nothing to say but only asked, don't you want to confess, I could not back him up and answered, quite legitimately, I wouldn't know what to confess, and he replied, he thought I did know, and he couldn't even look me straight in the eyes. For years he could have observed how Barbara's or my face twitched, and my daughter Lina's bellyache, but all that had been nothing to him, not so now that all was going well, though without his blessing. I told him what I thought about that. He said that he never listened to gossip but was answerable for preventing the spreading of the bacillus, which would make half the community sick at the very mention of us, and that I could bear even less to be answerable for it, either towards God or towards my daughters. I said I could bear to be answerable for many things as long as a man needs help and the ways are not always clear to him, in short, I refused point-blank to make a confession of it, when he still couldn't look me in the face, but only stroked his hip with one hand.

I then offered him a glass of schnapps, whereupon he did not come in, but said: if you will not avail yourself of the secrecy of confession I must ask you as a fellow citizen to give yourself up, because otherwise you will be in trouble, you will make the village unhappy with your state of affairs, or would you prefer to have your roof set on fire one night? High Court of Justice, that gave me a fright, to hear him talk of a fire, when I had lost one child in a fire before, and there too the cause had remained obscure, although I had never given offence to anyone. Whereupon my daughter Barbara rushed into the room and made our distress very great by

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screaming that the Vicar was a dirty old man and ought to wipe his nose after sticking it into everyone's pots, when it wasn't his business, and did the scythe hand confess too what he had done to her? So the cat was out of the bag, as far as the scythe hand was concerned, and it then came out that the same had repeatedly lain in wait for her when she was helpless because of the heavy pails she was carrying, and had grabbed hold of her in spite of her protests. Finally, at the end of June, he had gone so far as to bash her head against a stone near the milking-shed, so that she couldn't struggle, and used her, because there was no help for her nearby, and on top of that had said to her mockingly, how well the meadow had been mown already, and hadn't he hurt her? Whereupon my daughter had screamed in her half-conscious state, with his miserable stub he couldn't do anyone any harm, let alone any good. Whereupon the same had merely buttoned up his trousers, saying, all right, all the more power to our buck, who had all the nanny-goats to himself, now that the farmer had come to an agreement with his daughters, and she was to give his regards to the whole happy household, put on his hat and left. That was a sad speech, since it is well known that lonely men have to make do with animals, when for years they cannot find a single human being, something I did not do even in my worst plight, but only deviated from the straight and narrow path to give my daughters peace, of which certainly the younger one ought not to have bragged, nor did I ever implant such arrogance in her heart.

Nevertheless, High Court of Justice, you should take into account that she was used by the scythe hand, and this without any understanding between them.

I have always believed that in such things there must be an agreement, and that two are needed for that, even with poor folk, and a little joy, which even beasts do not fail to feel in their fashion. But between my daughters and me this was so, because we did it for the sake of warmth and it was not the most important thing, but so that the family would be kept together, nor was violence ever used. But the scythe hand confessed his crime to the Vicar and got rid of his sin by bringing down justice upon our homestead, and we all had to pay dearly for Barbara's little lapse into pride. Now you want to know more than I can offer you, when the real shock and perdition came only after everyone took such a lively interest in the affair.

The scythe hand got off lightly because he is young and daft as a duck, but older flesh is never forgiven when it's tormented, and yet its trials are harder than those of any loud-mouthed young ruffian. But if my daughter Lina had been younger and without my fears, I should never have violated her, but it was because I saw her grey hairs and pity took hold of me like a rage that this daughter of mine was not to be taken for what she was, but must drag her bellyache around in silence all her life, which to this day seems more bestial to me than everything else. And this too was not because of the flesh, but because the flesh is tormented by a soul and has nothing left to hope for if it finds no warmth, something I could not bear to watch any longer. Everything else, as I have set it down, followed logically from that, because I could not slight Barbara, and never pursued those relations for their own sake, but only so that the girls should have some kindness in their lives.

And I raise no objection now if the whole responsibility falls on me, because men should always know better. I did not know better, only did what I could in those criminal acts to find the right course.

BY TAKING my daughters into care and appointing a guardian doubtless you know better, and I only ask that my daughters, because they are girls, will be spared as much of the disgrace as possible, perhaps in another valley, where they are not known. For we have never in our lives received as much attention as after the Vicar's visit, in which connection I will name only the Justice of the Peace, then Lina's old teacher, twice the constable, and then a regular police action even with dogs, as though we had ever thought of running away, when we couldn't even have known where to. All the nets are so tightly meshed everywhere. I have never seen my daughters again since then, and enough of cross-examinations, if I may say so, don't know whether they had to undergo them

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too and if that was of any use, they will hardly have understood all your words, but surely taken them to heart. So let me apologise at this point on their behalf. Nor do I want to receive a letter ever again from my daughters, if that could do them harm, would only like to know whether they are well cared for as far as the circumstances permit, and should be much gratified to obtain an assurance to that effect from you. I also beg for instructions as to how, once and for all, I am to express myself under interrogation, since I can see very well that I was far from satisfying the gentlemen with my way of speaking, but may well have made matters even worse, though I spoke the truth.

About the abnormality in my face which I got rid of but which has now returned, I beg you not to be disturbed, nor to be put off by it, if that is possible. I shall manage all right.

Details of the criminal act, I am sorry to say, embarrass me, since the process is familiar enough to grown-up people, and I should only like to observe that most of those can go through the same in more favourable circumstances, nor do I believe that more is to be learnt about it from my daughters than what every real man or woman knows.

MAKE AN END OF IT, at last, honourable Court, because you are better off, or I could begin to say things I should be sorry about, all right, I will admit to having led my daughters into misdeamour, if you insist on it and I can lessen the plight of those girls by saying so.

Perhaps it is possible, too, to choose a guardian for my daughters who is not a clergyman. These, I regret to say, often fall into false assumptions which their wards then have to swallow, but can't always, which leads to tragedies.

Every man and woman is tormented in their way, and I have learnt that those who are stronger will then oppress others because of it, by which I don't mean to deny their good will, and please don't hold those words against me.

I have written to you only because my spoken words are not adequate for your satisfaction and because perhaps you will take the opportunity, none the less, to convey a greeting to my daughters, which I set down herewith, but this too not for my sake, but because in those years my daughters grew accustomed again to a little warmth.

May it please you to tell them that they are on my mind by day and night, but not in the way the High Court of Justice thinks.

Translated by Michael Hamburger

Mantovani at the Mental Hospital

Music on stand-by smoothes the ruffled air
Of broken transmissions. Our minds are drawn
To forget the hands at work on the wires,
The urgent studios seeking to replace
These lush minutes with a contact gone.
We wait, unruffled, not adjusting our sets.

This grey mansion, too, has seemed to hold
A bland composure. Inmates have kept
To courtyards, troubling none with broken faces,
Always invisible beyond the lawn's
Fountain and flowers. Passing we hear music;
Over the bright shrubbery the lilting strings.

Frank Ormsby

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Jonathan Power

The Alternative to Starvation

Despair, Dogma & Hope in the Third World

"Famine is something quite peculiar. It concentrates all effort and thought and feeling on one thing. It makes everyone a frustrated glutton. In a famished town, as in a cheap restaurant, there is always a flavour of food in the air. Everybody brooding on food makes a smell which hangs about them like the smell of gravy and cabbage about a dirty tablecloth. Somehow famine goes beyond hunger and puts in each face a kind of lewdness; a kind of grey unwholesome longing. People's white gums and mouldering flesh suggest rather a consuming disease like leprosy than appetite. They seem diseased, even evil, rather than pathetic. Their eyes are greedy and restless, and linger greedily, it sometimes seem, on one another's bodies. Their skin gets unnaturally dry and their breath parched and stale like dry air in a cellar. . . ."
MALCOLM MUGGERIDGE, *Winter in Moscow (1934)*

HUNGER is an age-old subject that has been with us since the serpent tempted Adam and Eve to pluck the apple. It is with us again in starker form than it has been for several generations, and it is surely not a subject that should be approached with great confidence in man's capacity to respond to crisis.

On a tomb on the Egyptian island of Sihel, there is a remarkable inscription, dated in the reign of Djeser during the Third Dynasty. It reads:

> I am mourning on my high throne for this vast misfortune because the Nile flood in my time has not come for seven years. Light is the grain; there is lack of crops and of all kinds of food. Each man has become a thief to his neighbour. They desire to hasten and cannot walk. The child cries, the youth creeps along, and the heads of the old men are bowed down; their legs are bent together and drag along the ground, and their hands rest in their bosoms. The counsel of the great ones in the Court is but emptiness. Torn open are the chests of provisions, but instead of contents there is air. Everything is exhausted.

A contemporary chronicle of the Kashmir famine in 917 A.D. records that the land became covered with bones until it resembled a vast burial ground, and the king and his ministers, far from attempting to relieve suffering, amassed riches by selling grain at a high price.

When the great Irish famine set in some 130 years ago, Charles Trevelyan, the English Treasury official responsible for famine policy, refused to allow the procurement of home cereals for relief because it would "disturb the market." In Bernard Shaw's *Man and Superman* (1903), the returned Irish American, Malone, insists on calling the famine "the starvation":

> "Me father died of starvation in the black '47. Maybe you've heard of it?"
> "The famine?"
> "No, the starvation. When a country is full of food and exporting it, there can be no famine. Me father was starved dead and I was starved out to America in me mother's arms."

When the Bengal famine of 1943 began—the worst of this century—the India Office (under L. S. Amery) refused to admit its existence, preferring the euphemism "food shortage." A Government Commission, charged with finding why over two million people died, later found that "it lay in the power of the government of Bengal, by bold, resolute and well conceived measures at

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the right time, to have largely prevented the tragedy of the famine as it actually took place."

In 1946, however, we can record a happier sequence of events.

At the end of the Second World War much of Europe was devastated and disorganised. Germany, according to Prime Minister Attlee, was "down to her last potato almost.... India was very badly off and could not be left to look after herself.... We had to decide, as a deliberate act of policy, that Britain would have to go without in order to help."

On 3 January 1946 Mr Attlee cabled President Harry Truman. He told him that there was a deficit of seven million tons between the available supplies and the demand for grain: "It is our view that unless the maximum quantities that can be spared are exported from all the producing countries there is a grave danger of wide famine in Europe and Asia."

President Truman instructed his cabinet officers to investigate. Then on 4 February Attlee telegraphed Truman again. He told him that Britain was accepting a reduction of nearly a quarter-of-a-million tons in its wheat imports in the first half of 1946. This meant, he explained, that Britain would be reducing its stocks below safety levels. Britain was also going to reduce the fat ration from 8 to 7 ozs a week (which was lower than any time during the War). Moreover, they were going to divert grain from animal to human consumption so the British would be eating less meat, bacon, and eggs. Attlee rounded off the cable with an appreciation of Truman's decision to increase wheat exports; but he asked (since the situation was worsening visibly, particularly in India where Attlee feared another Bengal Famine) if the Americans could do more. Truman was later to describe Attlee's cable as a "vivid picture of the measures of hardship the British people would have to undergo" and emphasise the deep impression it made on him. Two days later he announced a 9-point emergency programme in the United States which included control over all wheat and flour exports, diversion of grain supplies from livestock to humans, and an increase in the wheat-flour extraction rate, thus forcing bakers to produce a darker bread.

The situation, however, continued to deteriorate. The Indian monsoon had been disastrous, and on 26 February Attlee cabled Truman a third time asking him to increase the spring planting of rice and wheat and to reduce the consumption of rice. Truman responded by calling together a "Famine Emergency Committee" and asked ex-President Hoover, famous for his international relief work after the First World War, to head it.

In July Attlee introduced bread rationing (a remarkable step considering Britain had survived the War without it). Attlee's biographer, Francis Williams, records that

> it was a politically dangerous and highly unpopular decision. But Attlee believed it was morally right.

By these and other measures in the United States and also in Canada and Australia, the worst consequences of what at one time seemed inevitable were avoided.

WE FACED in 1975 an equally critical and indeed perhaps more critical situation. The years 1971–72 brought a sudden end to the euphoria surrounding the "Green Revolution"—the use of so-called miracle seeds that doubled yields all over Asia and in parts of Latin America.

Bad weather was the principal cause of the setback. But a number of other coincidental developments compounded the problem. In particular the simultaneous boom in economic activity in the developed countries led to increased demand for food. Then the Russians, after their disastrous 1972 harvest, bought 20 million tons of wheat and 10 million tons of coarse grains (most of it in America). Under the impact of these developments, American stocks began to decline to dangerously low levels. In an act of folly that will long be remembered the United States did not take advantage of the good weather in 1973 to bring all its idle farm land back into cultivation and rebuild its stocks.

Thus the world entered 1974 facing its most precarious food situation ever. By February, U.S. wheat for export cost almost four times as much as in June 1972, and millions of poor people in the Third World rapidly began to find that food was being priced out of reach.

In Bangladesh, between January and August 1974, cereal prices doubled—they have risen five-fold in five years. In Thailand, the price of rice had doubled since August 1973. One kilo of tuna-fish had gone from six to 22 bahts, yet the average factory worker was paid only 16 bahts a day. In Guatemala the prices of basic foodstuffs more than doubled in 1974. Maize went up from 4 to 9 centavos a pound, beans and rice from 8 to 17 centavos a pound and flour from 7 to 17 centavos a pound. For people who are spending

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70 to 80% of their incomes on food, these price rises mean less food, increased malnutrition and, over a period of time, a steady increase in the death rate.

Then came the bad news of the 1974 harvest—the final blow.

AT THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE (held in Rome last November) I heard no real debate on just how severe the crisis is—that seemed to be taken as read. At the most there was some quibbling from the Americans on whether the F.A.O.'s estimate of an immediate need for 9½ million tons of grain as food aid was "on the high side." But even they admitted that the shortfall was 7–8 million tons and that this estimate was based on a very conservative interpretation of what hunger meant. Some experts, for example, have been citing the year 1971—the last good year—as a benchmark. Work out the deficit, they say, by measuring the fall in nutrition levels from that year. The chief American economist in the delegation, Dr Paarlburg, admitted that this would probably give a much higher figure than 9½ million tons, but he though it politically unrealistic to discuss the crisis in those terms.

Although there was no debate on the substance of the matter—the need for imperative action if crisis and catastrophe were to be averted—there was an enormous divergence of opinion on who should pay. The American delegation argued that if they were to give their fair share of the 9½ million tons, they would have to find 5 million (the Canadians, 1 million; the EEC, 2½ millions; and Australia and others, 1 million). And since they had no reserves to speak of, this would mean restricting some of their already agreed commercial exports, re-evaluating the stocks they needed to carry for their own strategic reserves, and then finally reducing the amount of grain going to their own livestock. They argued that if this were done, they would run into enormous political and economic difficulties. First, it would exacerbate inflation as the Government stepped into the market-place to buy up grain. Second, it would require Congress to approve a sizable budgetary appropriation. And in a time of economic stringency this was "just not on."

The 1974–75 situation was salvaged by a remarkable coincidence of forces. Most important was the impact of the recession in the United States. Richard Bell, the Department of Agriculture official in charge of foreign assistance, explained to me in an interview in February that:

> "The demand for grain for livestock feeding is 29,000,000 tons down on 1974. Americans are cutting back on their meat in a way we ourselves never anticipated. Less pork is being produced now than at any time in the past 30 years."

This was a major influence in bringing the price of wheat down from $5.08 a bushel in November 1974 to around $3.78 in March 1975. Jim Placke (the senior State Department official who monitors the crisis for Dr Kissinger) commented: "The shortage of stocks is just not being reflected in the market today. The price fall is amazing, given the fact we have no stocks. . . ."

The effect of this fall in grain prices was twofold. First, it enabled needy importing countries who were buying grain commercially to get more for their money than anticipated. Second, it gave a boost to the food-aid programmes of Western countries which (by and large) were established in terms of financial appropriation rather than quantity.

The Americans, who spent $1.6 billion on food aid during the financial year 1974–75, were able to buy as much as 3,750,000 tons more than was originally estimated! The decision, however, to increase food aid from $891 million to $1.6 billion —made possible by a well-organised humanitarian lobby—was delayed for weeks while Dr

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Kissinger wrestled tortuously with Congress about the definition of food aid. He wanted a flexible interpretation so that food could be given not merely to meet humanitarian needs but as a form of budgetary support to Chile, Jordan, Egypt and South Viet Nam.

The other major surprise development was the step-up in Indian commercial buying of food grains. By general consent India was the biggest problem although not as intractable as Bangladesh. The concessional financing of India's oil imports, arranged by a number of OPEC countries, and the windfall profits from her sizable sugar exports had eased her always chronic balance-of-payments problem; and "national pride" dictated that India must avoid at all cost becoming dependent once again on "American handouts."

BUT WHAT was the situation this year? It was certainly better than 1974. The monsoon in Asia began on time; in the Sahel there is rain; and the U.S. harvest looks like being a record. However it is still too early to be absolutely sanguine; much can go wrong before harvests are in.

The food aid situation has dramatically improved—of that there is no doubt. This year, well ahead of the critical period of shortage, the grain-exporting countries of the West have begun to make the right decisions; the White House has already budgeted $1.3 billion for food aid—almost double what they had allocated this time last year. Moreover, the United States no longer bears the burden of having to give food as a kind of political support to Laos, South Viet Nam, and Cambodia; this tied up 17% of last year's food total. Australia and Canada have also become more generous. After the World Food Council meeting in June the grain exporters only fell one million tons short of the Council's target of 10 million tons of grain. (The major culprit was the EEC, which stubbornly refused to do its bit.) In sum, the difference between this year and this time last year is enormous.

Yet, for all that, the situation remains grave. Even if the harvest turns out to be a good one, the developing countries must import at least 40 million tons of grain. The extra food aid will help, but still 75% of their needs will have to be paid for by purchases on the open market—the same market the Russians are now anxiously trying to corner. Last year's prices for oil and food wiped out the financial reserves of many developing countries, and the International Monetary Fund estimates that the balance-of-payments deficits for non-oil exporting developing countries will be $36 billion this year compared with $27 billion a year ago. (The 1974 figure itself was three times larger than the 1973 one.) Moreover, the commodity boom of 1973 which did much to bail the developing countries out of last year's débâcle is over. In the last year there has been a sharp downward turn in their terms of trade. The poor countries are earning less even though they are working as hard as, or even harder than they were two years ago.

This brings us, again, to the Russians; what they do (or are allowed to do) is critically important. The U.S.S.R. harvest is estimated to face a shortfall of 33 million tons. So far this year they have bought 9.8 million tons of U.S. grain and five million tons in other markets. The Soviets would need another 18 million tons to make good the shortage without slaughtering livestock and tightening their belts—something that the Kremlin in its new sense of affluence is no longer quite so ready to do. If the Russians were allowed to purchase all they wanted, wheat prices could shoot up over last year's record high of $5 a ton—a price that developing countries just cannot afford. Compare this with the 1972 price of $1.80, a price which had remained constant for some years. It is not surprising that the United States is chided for its hypocrisy—last year the U.S.A. gained more from the rise in food prices than it lost from the rise in oil prices.

At present the U.S. Department of Agriculture has persuaded the Russians and the grain dealers to agree to a moratorium on future sales. Yet the policy is almost entirely dictated by domestic considerations. If the wholesale price index stabilises and the new crop report is favourable, and if there is a satisfactory outcome to the negotiations in Moscow for a long-term agreement which would modify the inflationary impact of foreign grain sales on the U.S. market, then the Russians may be allowed to buy more. But is this right and proper? Should the rich export grain to their fellow rich while others are starving? Shouldn't the developing countries be allowed into the market-place first, so that they can shop at a price they can more easily afford? Surely, only then should the Russians be given a green light. This may require the complicated step of creating a two-tier market for grain sales; but

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that is hardly beyond the wit of man to devise. (Of course, if this were done, Canada, Australia, and the EEC would have to come to some arrangement to share the burden with the United States.)

Whatever is done to resolve the immediate crisis, there looms the larger question of how we develop a so-called "developing world" that is continuously on the edge of the abyss of disaster. The crisis in food production and distribution is but *one* warning light indicating that something is going seriously wrong. Once we begin to dismantle the engine of "economic development" we find at least *three* other major faults. There is the phenomenon of numbers of "new proletarians" swarming off an overcrowded unsupporting land into cities built to receive but a twentieth or a fortieth of the number. From this problem is born yet another—unemployment and underemployment (in some Third World countries unemployment rates run as high as 40%). Then there is the problem of income distribution. All the indications are that when there has been rapid economic growth and urbanisation, the new wealth instead of easing the social condition has worsened it—increasing the disparities between men, indeed in some countries making the poor even poorer.

I plan to look at these tragic "mechanical faults" in turn. Then I shall go on to examine an alternative—a new machinery based on the dynamics of rural development—the only hope, I believe, if we are to avoid a sequence of "world food crises", each one worse than the last.

Migration

IN THE LAST HALF-CENTURY or so, 1920–73, the number of persons engaged in agriculture in the developing world almost doubled: it increased from approximately 240 million to 450 million. In the same space of time the acreage of agricultural land increased by only a quarter. It is not surprising then, given the low level of technical expertise in the countryside and the increasing awareness (thanks to the transistor radio) of the "glories" of the town, that hundreds of thousands of people have flocked from their villages into the cities.

And given these overwhelming pressures on the Third World cities it is not surprising to see large numbers of their young men then going on to migrate overseas—South Koreans to Japan; Mexicans to the United States; Turks, Algerians, and West Indians to Western Europe.[1]

Between 1920 and 1960 the urban population of the Third World rose at an annual rate of 4%. This is *twice* the rate in the developed countries during their time of development. In the 1850s, when 15% of Europe's population was living in towns, the annual rate of increase of urbanisation was 1.2%. In the developing countries at around the same stage of development—the 1950s—the rate was 2.6%. In some Third World countries the pace of transition between countryside and town reaches almost breathtaking proportions.

Take the case of Brazil. As recently as 1950 Brazil was still a predominantly agrarian nation with about 64% of its people living in the countryside. But 15 years later the rural and urban populations were about the same, and by 1970 the census found that only 44% of the country's 93 million people were left on the farms. Between 1960 and 1970 10 million people migrated and the urban population mushroomed by 5.2% a year; that, together with natural increase, took the town population up to 21 million. At the end of the decade one quarter of Brazil's population was concentrated in nine large metropolitan areas.

Unemployment & Underemployment

A FRIGHTENINGLY HIGH proportion of these new proletarians-to-be end up in the towns without a job, and often without a roof over their heads. The number of unemployed in urban agglomerations of 20,000 or more inhabitants has grown as follows: 1950, 8 million; 1960, 13 million; 1970, 24 million. Unemployment in the urban areas of Africa averages 27%; in the Philippines 13%; in Bogota, Colombia 11%. One-third of the countries have unemployment rates of over 15%. In two-thirds of the countries it exceeds 8%.

But to see the full danger of these figures they should be compared with Europe when it was developing. In Britain between 1851 and 1910 unemployment did not normally exceed 6 to 7%. On rare occasions at a time of economic crisis it may have reached 15–20%.[2] In Germany the

[1] See Jonathan Power, "The New Proletariat", ENCOUNTER, September 1974.

[2] According to Brian R. Mitchell and Phyllis Deane, *Abstract of British Historical Statistics* (Cambridge University Press, 1962), pp. 64–65. By 10-year period, the average percentages are as follows: 1851–60 4.8%; 1861–70 5.4%; 1871–80 4.0%; 1881–90 5.2%; 1891–1900 4.4%; 1901–10 5.1%.

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figures were lower—between 1887 and 1914 unemployment averaged only 2.4%.[3]

Mahub ul Haq (who used to be the Chief Economist with the Pakistan Planning Commission and who is now with the World Bank) has written about how the so-called Plans of developing countries are often made:

> . . . looking at the national plans of the developing countries, it was obvious that employment was often a secondary, not a primary, objective of planning. It was generally added as an after-thought to the growth target in *GNP* but very poorly integrated in the framework of planning. Recalling my own experience with formulation of Pakistan's five-year plans—the chapter on employment strategy was always added at the end, to round off the plans and make them look complete and respectable, and was hardly an integral part of the growth strategy of policy framework. In fact, most of the developments which affected the employment situation favourably such as the rural works programme and the green revolution, were planned primarily for higher output, and their employment-generating potential was accidental and not planned. There were endless numbers of research teams, our own and foreign, fixing up our national accounts and ensuring that they adequately registered our rate of growth; there was not a fraction of this effort devoted to employment statistics.
>
> The employment objective, in short, has been the stepchild of planning, and it has been assumed, far too readily, that high rates of growth will ensure full employment as well. But what if they don't? A sustained 6% rate of growth in Pakistan in the 1960s led to rising unemployment, particularly in East Pakistan.[4]

In an attempt to show just how impossible the situation is an OECD study has made the following calculation. It takes an average condition prevailing in the developing countries: a manufacturing sector employing 20% of the labour force; the unemployment rate and underemployment rate together average 25%; the increase in labour productivity is assumed to be 2.5% a year, the rate achieved between 1955 and 1968.

It then calculates that in order to absorb an increase in the labour force growing at 3% a year (it is in fact growing at 4%), industrial production would have to increase at the phenomenal rate of 18% a year. (Even record-breaking Brazil has only achieved 15%.) To eradicate within a decade the existing rural and urban unemployment and underemployment, it would have to increase by 30–35% a year. Even to match productivity increases and thus maintain a constant labour force in manufacturing, a 3% growth per annum in output is needed. The report not surprisingly concludes:

> Thus eradication of general underemployment through the development of industrial employment is a practical impossibility in the medium term.[5]

And in an ominous footnote we are told "in some African countries manufacturing employment seems to have been falling." Robert McNamara adds to the gloom surrounding the problem.

> For employment to grow at a rate of 4.5% per year in the urban areas of the developing world would be a tremendous achievement, beyond anything that has been achieved in the past . . .[yet] a 4.5% growth in urban jobs would provide work for an increase in the total rural and urban labour force of 1.3%, or approximately one-half of the increase anticipated.[6]

AND SO THE *favelas* and *callampas*, the *barriades* and *bidonvilles* will continue to proliferate. Already in Calcutta the number of people living in one room is 79% of the population. Large numbers live on the pavement. In Caracas 30% of the population live in shanty towns, in Lima 20%, in Buenos Aires 10%.

How can sanitation and sewerage systems cope? Djakarta has a population of nearly 5 million, but it has no sewerage, no safe running water, and few transport services. In Brazil only 45% of the municipalities have reliable water supplies; only 34% have sewerage systems. In 1971 only 38% of Latin American towns had sewerage services, and even that was up from 28% in 1961.

Although the conclusion is clear—the town cannot usefully employ these millions of people and if it cannot employ them it cannot house them either—they continue to pour in. It could well be that by 1980 Latin America will have a population of 358 million. 60% of these (or 218 million) will be living in the cities. This will mean an increase of the urban population of 100 million—equivalent to all of Brazil's population—within the short space of 15 years. In 1960 there were nine cities in eight Latin American countries with over one million inhabitants—in 1980 there will be 27 cities of this size.

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[3] According to J. Kuczynski, *Die Geschichte der Lage der Arbeiter in Deutschland von 1789 bis in der Gegenwart* (Berlin, 1954), Vol. I, Part 2, especially p. 80.

[4] Mahub ul Haq "Employment in the 1970s—A New Perspective", *International Development Review* (April 1971), p. 10.

[5] David Turnham, *The Employment Problem in Less Developed Countries*, (OECD, 1971), pp.1 93–120.

[6] Robert McNamara, *One Hundred Countries, Two Billion People* (Praeger, 1973), pp. 63–64.

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Income Distribution

ONE OF THE MOST WIDELY-HELD BELIEFS among economic thinkers, until relatively recently, was the view that the most effective way to increase the populace's well-being was through rapid industrialisation. But, as is now abundantly clear, large amounts of labour are not so easily given gainful work. And there is increasing evidence that even when it is employed it only occurs in a situation where income distribution becomes severely skewed.

Haq, in the confessional analysis quoted earlier, goes on to point out that not only did unemployment increase in the 1960s during Pakistan's period of high growth, but real wages in the industrial sector declined by one third. Per capita income disparity between East and West Pakistan nearly doubled, and

> "the concentration of industrial wealth became an explosive economic and political issue. In 1968, while the intellectual world was still applauding Pakistan as a model of development, the system exploded—not only for political reasons but for economic unrest."

So now after two decades of testing the Industrial-Growth strategy in real-life laboratories there is a growing awareness that all is not so straightforward.

Mexico, like Pakistan, has been regarded as one of the development successes: its *GNP.* has risen by 6–7% annually for the past 15 years. But government policy has had a hefty bias toward the urban sector and large farms; and again, like Pakistan, *unemployment* has been on the increase and *income disparities* have worsened. Between 1950 and 1969 the average per capita income grew in real terms by 3% a year. The richest 10% of the population received 49% of the total national income at the beginning of this period, and 51% at the end. Meanwhile the poor got less: in 1950 the bottom 40% received 14% of the income pie; by 1969 it was down to 11%. The poorest 20% saw their share of the pie cut from 6% to 4%.[7]

India, for all its attempts to "socialise" its economy (through a large state-run industrial sector), still has 40% of its entire population—some 200 million people—below the poverty line—the level at which serious malnutrition is held to exist. The World Bank believes that the poorest 10% of the population (a not insignificant 50 million people) may have even grown poorer.

Yet for all the accumulating evidence against the panacea of fast growth based on the industrial sector it would not be fair to damn it without a close look at what has happened in Brazil. It is certainly in a statistical sense a remarkable success story.

BRAZIL'S 10% increase in *GDP.* in 1974 made it the fourth consecutive year in which the growth of the Brazilian economy was 10% or more. It was the sixth year in which it had topped 9%. The average rate of growth of 10.2% over 1967–73 resulted in a 50% increase in average net individual incomes. During these 6 years manufacturing output doubled and merchandise exports grew from $1.7 billion to over $6 billion.

With its population of close on 100 million, Brazil now has a larger national economy than any other Western-hemisphere country, bar the United States and Canada. No other developing country comes near to imitating its successful growth rate. The down-town areas of Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro give a visual impression of being wealthier and more developed than any European city and indeed than any North American city, save perhaps New York, Chicago and Los Angeles.

Yet for all its glitter and glory the average per capita income of this massive giant is a mere $600, making it one of the poorer Latin American countries. And the evidence appears to suggest that, during this time of high growth, income distribution dramatically worsened.

The richest 10% of the population appropriated almost three-quarters of the gain in income between 1960 and 1970; the poorest 50% took less than a tenth. Those with university education experienced a rise in income of 52%, while the half of the population with some primary education had an income increase of only 14%. The Minister of Finance himself admitted of this surge of growth that "it is probable that between 1964 and 1967 the [wage] formula provoked a certain compression of real wages." And the World Bank found that "the share of the net income received by the poorest 40% declined from 10% in 1960 to 8% in 1970."

The American economist Albert Fishlow who has made what is widely regarded as the authoritative evaluation of Brazilian income distribution, has observed:

> "to bring the lowest decile in the 1970 income distribution up to a minimum standard of living will take a continuing growth rate of 5% annually

[7] McNamara, *One Hundred Countries . . .*, p. 103.

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> for 20 years. That assumes the present income distribution remains unchanged. If it continues to worsen, as present policies do little to forestall, the time required could easily involve another decade. Can the present starving poor be expected to wait around for 30 years amid rising affluence to attain the princely sum of $100 per capita?"

Fishlow's criticisms are shared by an increasing number of economists both inside and outside Brazil. But the Brazilian policy-makers stand firm. The Minister of Finance has argued that those who favour greater equality are engaging in "a veritable confidence game which could end up leaving the nation dividing misery more equitably."

In reply Fishlow says that it would require only 6.1% of the income of those above the poverty standard to be transferred to those below it to bring them up to the minimum. (The "poverty line" is $480 [1973 prices] for a family of 5 in the rural north-east and $690 in the urban south and east.) Fishlow argues—and this is the nub of the debate—that "such a redistribution of income would allow ample scope for continuing the incentive effects of differential rewards."

Robert McNamara has taken up the same argument in a thinly-veiled attack on the Brazilian government when (at the *Unctad* Conference in Santiago, in April 1972) he said:

> "It is often suggested that wide disparities in income are necessary in order to provide entrepreneurial incentives. Without arguing whether such incentives are important stimuli to productivity, one can question the amount of incentive that is required to motivate the desired degree of effort. In a study of the income disparities of 39 developing countries, in which the income of the wealthiest 6% of the population is measured as a multiple of the bottom 40%, there is a wide range of differences among countries. In 8 of the 39 countries the per capita income of the top 5% is more than 30 times greater than that of the lowest 40%. In 16 countries the ratio is less than 15 to 1. (In the United States, the ratio is 5 to 1).
>
> "The significant point is that when one compares these two sets of countries on the basis of their per capita growth performance during the 1960s there is no discernible relationship between the size of the incentives and the rapidity of growth. The average rate of growth of the group of countries with the greatest disparities was not significantly different from the group with the least. This indicates that there may well be substantial scope in the developing countries for moderating the highly skewed disparities in income without crippling the incentives to greater productivity."

YET FOR ALL THE EVIDENCE AGAINST the Brazilian way of doing things it would be foolish to underestimate the force of the arguments on their side. The government argues that "accelerated growth [is] the most powerful instrument to redistribute opportunities." Education is to be relied on as the principal instrument for reconciling in the future the inevitable imbalances produced by opting for permanent growth. Just as market signals have elicited growth, so runs their argument, so shall they ultimately yield higher incomes for the poor by judiciously investing in human capital. The government has not been convinced, either by its own experience or that of the other developing countries, that governmental programmes which are aimed directly at alleviating rural poverty can be successfully applied on a nation-wide scale. It believes that high economic growth-rates, based primarily on the performances of the industrial sector, offer the most likely chance of absorbing the marginal population into the modern sector.

And it is undoubtedly true that the Brazilian government has used the enormous revenues it has earned so far from taxing this economic growth to spend sizable sums of money on schools, health and sanitary services, housing and regional development.

Public expenditure on education will approach 4.5% of *GNP* this year, compared with 3.4% in 1972. The government aim, before the year is out, is to have 80% school enrolment for the 5–14 age group. The national literacy campaign has already trained 3.5 million people in the first two years of its operation. The housing programme has as its goal the construction of 2 million units by 1980 for families with incomes of between one and three minimum wages. The water and sewerage programme has a target of bringing water supply to 80% of residences and sewerage to 50%.

More than this, however, is the very visible witness that the high growth rate has had great success in absorbing the "new proletariat", even though it is increasing at 5.2% a year. There are no small boys, homeless, sleeping on the pavements at night—and this is very different from the streets of Lima and Bogota. The shanty town areas in Sao Paulo have less than 4% of the population—extraordinarily low by Latin American standards. And in 1973 and 1974 there were reports of tight urban and rural labour markets in the south, even for relatively unskilled workers.

So what does this do with the argument of those who would scorn Brazil's way of development? Perhaps it is true, although there is no way of testing such a hypothesis yet, that an economic growth rate of 10% achieves things

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which a 6% growth rate in Pakistan and Mexico cannot. Is there, then, a critical turning-point—8% or 9% or 9.5%—at which employment can be created faster or as fast as immigrants are sucked in?

THE UNDOUBTED ACHIEVEMENTS of the Brazilian phenomenon notwithstanding, we are left with certain awkward questions.

Could other countries do what Brazil has done even if they wanted to? Pakistan and Mexico have tried and failed. Is Brazil's "success" going to continue for long? What will happen now that, in 1975, its growth rate has dropped below 8%? Will not its urban situation get out of control like everyone else's? (And even today its "success" does not extend much beyond Rio and Sao Paulo. In Recife, a town of over a million inhabitants, 60% of the people live in *favelas*.)

Does not Brazil's incentive-led growth produce a mentality that works actively against development? Rio de Janeiro has more doctors per head of population than any other city in the world, yet in the Brazilian interior it has one of the world's lowest ratios.

Why should this enormous investment in education necessarily produce more equality? Education as practised in Brazil (and most other developing countries) too often encourages young people to leave the land and become part of the depressed urban proletariat, whereas if education was linked with agricultural knowledge and land reform, it could become a great constructive force.

Is it not true that none of the social programmes that are so much discussed—housing, education, sanitary services—will reach the really poor? Is not their aim rather to help create a stable upper working class?

Won't the increasing inequality of incomes produce enormous political stresses which will one day tear the fabric of the country apart and set back growth of any kind for years?

One final question. Is there not a more humane way of achieving economic development? One fraught with such inequalities as the Brazilian/Mexican/Pakistani way does not leave much room for the poor to have a say in their own destiny and is not that what the Third World's development efforts are all about?

II: Rural Development—An Alternative Development Machine

COULD IT BE that one way of resolving simultaneously the interlocked problems of food shortages, overpopulation, migration, slum creation and income distribution is to give greater emphasis to developing the countryside? I mean not the countryside of the landowner, the estate or the latifundia, but that of the small independent farmer. Already we know enough about agricultural technique to get the smallholder to raise his productivity so that by 1985 his yields would be increasing at 5% a year. And if this were done it would certainly break the back of the immediate crisis, even if it did not dissolve the problem of poverty.

The Potential of Agriculture

DESPITE ALL THE PROBLEMS confronting Third World agriculture, the fact is that a number of countries have shown that it is possible to keep food production well ahead of population growth.

Population in the underdeveloped countries is growing at 2.7% a year but over a twenty-year period (1952–1972) food production expanded at an annual rate of 6.1% in Venezuela, 5.4% in Togo, 5.8% in Lebanon, and 5.3% in Thailand. Seven other countries topped the 5% mark: Bolivia, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Ecuador, Malaysia, Libya, and Mexico. Regrettably, however, many of the countries have not followed the strategy I am advocating in this article—all power to the potential productivity of small farmers.

In the North-East of Thailand the poorest 50% of the farmers during the 1960s saw their average income decline (from about half of the region's average to less than 20%). The average income of 50% of the rural households suffered a negative growth rate both in the North-East and the South.[8] In Mexico 80% of the increase in production between 1950 and 1960 came from only 3% of the farms. The number of landless rural labourers increased from 2.3 million to 3.3 million. Because of labour-displacing mechanisation, the number of days worked by each labourer declined by almost a half from 194 to 100. The already low incomes of these workers

[8]U.S. State Dept., "The Employment Problem in Thailand" (September 1972).

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actually declined from $68 to $56 a year during the decade (at a time when per capita income for Mexico as a whole increased from $308 to $405).[9]

In both these cases people were pushed off the land and into the shanty towns.

Undaunted by these unhappy precedents, I now go on to argue that if certain bottle-necks in the production system are removed, 5% growth rates in agriculture can be achieved without these harmful consequences; and that the 5% growth could be based on the production potential of the peasant farmers. These bottle-necks comprise archaic land-tenure arrangements; lack of credit; poor research and extension services; unproductive agricultural techniques; shortages of fertiliser and water supply and an underdeveloped rural-industrial sector.

Land Tenure

THE TABLE BELOW SHOWS the number of people held on the land by a range of different countries. Those at the top of the league, (Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, and Egypt) are those who have had vigorous land reform and have emphasised, as the backbone of their highly successful economic development, the role of the small peasant farmer. Those at the bottom (apart from the United States) are dominated by landlord–share-cropper arrangements with the tenant supplying up to 50% of his production as rent.

AGRICULTURAL WORKERS PER 100 ACRES (1965)

Country	*Number of Workers per 100 acres*
Japan	87
S. Korea	79
Taiwan	75
Egypt	71
Ceylon	49
India	36
Philippines	29
Yugoslavia	29
Colombia	20
Brazil	17
Mexico	12
Israel	11
Morocco	10
USA	less than 2

SOURCE: *Derived from tables in* FAO Production Yearbook (1969).
We should note that it is likely—if statistics were forthcoming—that China would also be near the top of this table.

[9] R. D. Hansen *The Policies of Mexican Development* (Baltimore, John Hopkins Press 1971), pp. 81, 210.

[10] William R. Cline, *Economic Consequences of a Land Reform in Brazil* (Amsterdam 1970).

Farms in Taiwan have yields per acre six times higher than the Philippines or India. In Taiwan in 1950 agricultural employment was 17 million, and it has increased at 1.2% a year since then. In 1968 it increased by 2.8%.

But for all the evidence that small-scale farmers are the most productive, many (if not most) countries simply assume the opposite is the case. The Brazilians, for example, argue—and they have in their North-East the most serious maldistribution of land in the world—that realism calls for caution in land reform. It is the bigger farmers, they say, who will more readily respond to the availability of credit and new technological ideas. Yet it has been shown in Brazil that returns to scale for different size farms (assuming the same quality of land) is relatively constant. In other words, given the same level of inputs, small farmers are as efficient as large farmers. Moreover, it has also been established (and an institution no less conservative than the World Bank has accepted these findings) that the intensity of land-use declines as farm size rises.[10] This suggests that a distribution of land from large farmers to small would increase land utilisation and consequently agricultural production.

Studies in other parts of the world have confirmed these Brazilian observations.

Theoretically the effects of land reform on agrarian productivity would best be judged if output in a given year could be compared "Before & After" reform. Unfortunately this is not possible as there is no situation where change has taken place and only one variable—the size of farm—has altered. The best we can do is to compare the productivity of groups of different size farms.

The World Bank and the FAO have made two such studies. They both found independently that *a smaller average size of holding* and *a low concentration of ownership* produced an *increase* in output-per-hectare. The World Bank study was of 41 countries and the findings are reproduced on page 21.

Similar findings have been made in cross-sectional studies in a number of individual countries. In Ceylon, in 1966–67, the yield of paddy was found to be *higher on the smaller farms* than on the larger: 36/37 bushels per acre on farms of less than one acre, and 33/34 on those of more. In Central Thailand yields were 304 kilos/rai on holdings of 2–6 acres, but down to 194 kilos/rai on holdings of 6 acres or more.

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Productivity, Employment and the Distribution of Land in Different Countries

Country	*Data Year*	*Farm GDP per Hectare (US $)*	*Farm GDP per Worker (US $)*	*Employment per Hectare*	*Average Holding Size (Hectare)*	*Gini's Index Land Concentration*
EUROPE						
Greece	1961	424	848	0.50	3.18	.597
Spain	1962	90	980	0.09	14.85	.832
CENTRAL AMERICA						
Costa Rica	1963	83	951	0.09	40.74	
Dominican Rep.	1971	129	463	0.28	8.64	
El Salvador	1961	186	489	0.38	6.95	
Guatemala	1964	144	492	0.29	8.17	
Mexico	1960	22	569	0.04	123.9	
Nicaragua	1963	55	580	0.09	37.34	
SOUTH AMERICA						
Argentina	1970	18	1903	0.01	270.1	.873
Brazil	1960	14	285	0.05	79.25	.845
Chile	1965	18	692	0.03	118.5	
Colombia	1960	67	663	0.10	22.60	.865
Paraguay	1961	11	479	0.02	108.7	
Peru	1961	50	477	0.10	20.37	.947
Uruguay	1966	14	1333	0.01	208.8	.833
Venezuela	1961	31	925	0.03	81.24	.936
ASIA						
India	1960	172	141	1.22	6.52	.607
Indonesia	1963	323	149	2.17	1.05	
Iran	1960	187	581	0.32	6.05	.624
Korea, Rep. of	1970	1085	377	2.88	0.85	
Japan	1960	1720	1188	1.45	1.18	.473
Nepal	1961/62	352	138	2.54	1.23	
Pakistan	1960	240	249	0.96	2.35	.607
Philippines	1960	250	200	1.25	3.59	.580
Sri Lanka	1962	376	337	1.12	1.61	
Taiwan	1960/61	841	410	2.05	1.27	.474
Thailand	1963	166	137	1.21	3.47	
Turkey	1963	155	243	0.64	5.03	.611
Viet Nam, Rep. of	1960	355	127	2.79	1.33	
AFRICA						
Botswana	1969/70	168	142	1.18	4.75	
Kenya	1969	183	140	1.31	871.3	
Malagasy	1961/62	293	88	3.32	1.04	
Mali	1960	98	48	2.06	4.35	
Morocco	1961	144	295	0.49	4.62	
Senegal	1960	209	174	1.20	3.62	
Tanzania	1960	485	94	5.16	785.7	
Togo	1961/62	189	180	1.05	2.62	
Tunisia	1961/62	42	341	0.12	15.41	
U. A. R.	1960/61	681	360	1.89	1.59	.748
Uganda	1963/64	167	198	0.84	3.29	
Zambia	1960	68	101	0.67	11.73	

SOURCES: *Cols. 1 and 3 are based on* FAO, Production Yearbook, 1971, *pp. 10-11, 21-23, and col. 4 on UN,* Monthly Bulletin of Statistics, *XXVI, No. 4, Apr. 1972 and XXVII, No. 11, Nov. 1973. For currency exchange rates, IMF,* International Financial Statistics, *XXVI, No 8, Aug. 1973. GDP in agriculture shown here includes, unless otherwise indicated, agriculture, hunting, forestry, and fishing.*

Small farms in the Philippines with less than 2 hectares produced 2.9 tons of paddy per hectare. Those over 4 hectares produced only 2.2 tons. On large "multi-family" farms and small "sub-family" farms in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Guatemala, output per hectare was found to be 3–14 times greater on average on the smaller farms than on the larger ones.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE FINDINGS cannot be overestimated. For decades now the defenders of the intellectual status quo, in the conventional wisdom of both the collectivist Left and the

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feudalist Right, have argued that land reform that favours the individual peasant will end by creating a depressed peasantry, too ignorant and small-minded to apply the knowledge that is necessary if productivity is to be increased. This view does not stand up to close scrutiny. The fact is that there are limited economies-of-scale in most farm production. Second, small-scale farmers tend to maximise output by applying labour intensively, while large-scale farms aim to maximise profit by using hired labour until incremental production covers incremental costs. This is, usually, *less* than the output per hectare that would be produced if the object were to maximise output.

There is also evidence to suggest that inputs other than labour are also likely to be applied more intensively on small farms. Unfortunately this must be regarded as nothing more than informed impressions by World Bank experts, rather than something confirmed by empirical results. The only hard information we have is a study of *developed* countries in 1961 where it was found that fertiliser use and gross fixed-capital formation per-unit-of-land were relatively higher in countries with smaller-than-average holdings.

So land reform can produce two critical benefits: increased production and greater labour absorption.

There are, however, still some worrying criticisms of the land-reform school of thought that have to be answered. It is said by the critics that a reduction in land concentration could—at least in the short run—lead to a shortfall in the amount farmers produce for market. A study carried out in India, to take one example, shows that small farmers sell only 24.5% of their output whereas the larger farmers sell 65.4%. The mistake here has been to look at the ratio of production surplus rather than at the changes in total output. Since per-acre-yields on small farms can be higher than on large farms, total output can increase to more than compensate for the rise in individual consumption ratios.

Besides, the lower ratio of production surplus has its positive side. It means that the poorer families are eating more themselves. Surely this is not only good in itself, but over time is likely to increase their productivity. Bad diet has been one of the most severe constraints on Third World development.

Nor is this all. It should never be overlooked that if land reform did not take place it is likely that many of the peasants would move to the town. There they would have to be fed by the bigger farmers using imported capital-intensive equipment and consuming imported luxury goods. Small farmers producing their own food make for less pressure on the balance of payments.

ANOTHER OBJECTION to land redistribution is said to be the "negative impact it would have on the savings rate." Savings are a key issue in development—without savings, either private or state, there can be no investment, and without investment there can be no growth in productive capacity.

There is little enough evidence of what happens to savings under the impact of land reform. But common sense would suggest that savings rates are likely to perform rather like the marketable surplus. So we will see some small farmers becoming net "dissavers" (perhaps because they run down existing soil fertility), whereas large farmers (although they can become "dissavers" too by, say, using their capital for consumption) usually have a positive savings rate. A recent study in India's state of Hariana confirms this. Here the savings ratio was 0.24% for small farmers; 8.5% for medium farmers; and 16.3% for large farmers. A further Indian study in Orissa underlined these results. Again, as with marketable surpluses, the shortfall in individual rates can be compensated for by an increase in aggregate rates simply because, after land reform, the countryside is running under a more productive smallholder system.

But a word of caution: land reform must give the peasant farmer sufficient land to enable him to produce enough not to be "a dissaver" and to grow enough to have a surplus for marketable sales.

THE FINAL QUESTION we must deal with—and this one will not be disposed of so easily—is this: In areas where land reform is most necessary is there enough land to go around? Or is it inevitable that at least some of the people must leave the land and move to the town?

In the Americas where population is not dense and yet where urban drift is extreme, land reform would enable practically all the rural population to have land. In other parts of the globe, however, the pressure of population is such that there is just not enough land to meet the minimum requirements of all the claimants. In India even if the maximum holdings were 20 acres the available land (some 43 million acres)

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would be barely sufficient to bring up the size of the smallest holdings to 5 acres—and even if this were done there would still be no land for the 20–25 million landless families. In Bangladesh a low 10-acre ceiling would not be sufficient to give every small farmer a 2-acre patch. Again there would be no land for the landless. In Haiti only 1.5 hectares would be available for the peasant farmer. But does this mean that we have to accept that those "left over" must become the dispossessed residents of urban squalor? The countryside has many possibilities other than the farm, and these will be examined below.

A postscript on two factors: cost and stability. Land reform is rarely expensive. It does not require large outlays of government funds, for payment is usually in bonds redeemable at a future date. It has been estimated that in those Latin American countries that used non-confiscatory reforms, only 9–15% of the total reform-related cash budgets went for land-owners' compensation. (And, of course, when land is confiscated as part of an arbitrary revolutionary process—as it was in Mexico, Bolivia, China and Cuba—there is even less public expenditure.)

Land reform, however, whether by confiscatory revolution or by democratic reform, usually brings a certain instability in its wake. Production goes down and traditional marketing and delivery systems are thrown into confusion. Yet with good management this unsettled period can be kept short and temporary.

Credit

CREDIT is a key element in providing the impetus that will increase the productivity of agriculture. Not only can it remove financial constraints, but it can provide the incentive to adopt technologies that otherwise would be too expensive.

Farmers have traditionally depended on credit —the credit of the money-lender or the *hacienda*-owner, all too often with exorbitant rates of interest of 40% or more.

The number of farmers using institutional credit (the bank, or legally recognised credit institutions) varies widely in different parts of the world. In parts of Africa only about 1% of the farmers use it. In Taiwan it is almost 100%. For Africa as a whole it is 5%. For Latin America and Asia (excluding Taiwan) it is about 15%.

More often than not it is the large farmers who benefit from credit. Nearly 80% of the small farmers have no access to credit. Small farmers generally spend less than 20% of what is needed on such inputs as improved seeds, pesticides, and fertiliser because they simply do not have the resources. In Asia, for example, the cost of fertiliser and pesticides required to make the maximum use of the new high-yielding varieties of wheat and rice ranges from $20–$80 per hectare. But the small farmer cannot afford more than $6 (and often he ends up borrowing that $6 at usurious rates of interests).

The Brazilian government's attitude to credit is fairly typical. It has in recent years been steadily increasing its credit provision for farms, and agricultural credit as a proportion of net agricultural domestic credit has increased from about 26% in 1966 to over 50% in 1972. Although the government took no special measures to ensure that the smaller farmers would get a fair share of this new credit the assumption was that since it was there they could simply ask for it. Agricultural loans were made cheaper than loans to other sectors of the economy; and the smaller the loan, the lower the rate of interest. But, in actual practice, there was little take-up by the small farmers, and they continued by and large to rely on landowners and trading companies. A recent survey of cotton farmers in the interior state of Ceara found that only 1 out of 60 sharecroppers had received institutional credit. But almost all had one or more informal loans obtained from farm owners or local merchants. Sadly, most of those people using credit were not employing it to improve their farms but to finance the purchase of the basic necessities of life until the next harvest came in.

The Brazilian experience is an everyday one: unfamiliarity with bank procedures (five-page forms are not uncommon); insufficient numbers of bank branches in rural areas; insecurity of tenure; high production risks and lack of profitable use for credit—all militate against the small-holder taking the initiative to seek out credit. And even if he does, banks often turn down such requests when they have a steady demand from more creditworthy customers.

This lack of credit to small farmers is a tragic universal misallocation. Several studies[11] in Brazil have shown that some reallocation of credit

[11] R. Meyer, D. W. Adams, N. Rask and P. F. Cidade de Araujo: *Rural Capital Markets and Small Farmers in Brazil, 1960–1972* (1973).

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from large agricultural users to small- and medium-sized farms would have a positive impact on output and would clearly help to achieve higher rates of employment and a better income distribution.

A FASCINATING EXPERIMENT in the Dominican Republic is attempting to circumnavigate these barriers to credit distribution. Convinced that small farmers could make use of credit, if given proper back-up with agricultural expertise, the Dominican Development Foundation (a private non-governmental organisation) has tried to find a way that is non-bureaucratic, simple, and above all appealing to small farmers. They have done this by working through groups of farmers rather than through individuals. Farmers who want to receive credit must set up an association, receive the money in the name of the group, and agree to be responsible as a group for the repayments of individual members. Banks have found that 10% or more of small farmers default on their loans; the Foundation with this method has reduced the defaulting rate to 4.2%. The social pressure of "not letting the group down" works astonishingly well.

The groups vary enormously. Some of them are quite loosely-knit with all individual members farming independently. They only come together to receive the loan. In others a co-operative or, if you will, collective system works at nearly every level of the productive enterprise. One example. A tomato farm is worked by a group of 30 families; they share the land and the cost of the large pump to bring water up from the river; and they organise the planting, weeding, and reaping operations so everyone takes an equal part of the load. The project—the community of Fondo Negro—has established itself in one of the driest and most impoverished parts of the country. The annual rainfall is only 650 mm, and average monthly temperatures vary from 25°C to 30°C. Yet these peasant farmers have cultivated 115 hectares of land, and they have made in the first year a net profit of $263 per hectare or approximately $1,052 per family.[12] Before they were set up in business by the Foundation and given the credit to prime their operations they had a yearly income of about $100 a family.

The Foundation's more advanced groups are now having their loan applications transferred to commercial banks. Convinced that these small farmers will not default after all, the big banks have been persuaded to take them on as normal customers. So far 105 groups are receiving loans in this way and the defaulting rate is down to 1%.

Fertiliser

OBVIOUSLY, an increase in agricultural production on a world-wide scale is going to call for enormous amounts of fertiliser and pesticide. In Holland where 4 tons of grain per hectare are obtained, fertiliser use averages 360 kilogrammes/hectare. Japan now uses more fertiliser than India even though its cultivated area is a mere 4% of India's.

The chemical engineer Raymond Ewell has warned us that fertiliser production (at the moment experiencing short-term difficulties) is likely to run into even more problems; and the warning signals are already out. In 1974 India had a million tons of fertiliser less than 1973 which meant (assuming normal weather conditions) a drop of 8 to 10 million tons in the production of wheat and rice. The FAO had estimated the fertiliser shortfall in the developing countries (for the crop year beginning July 1973) to be two million tons. This probably caused a loss in grain production of 20 million tons—or enough to feed some 100 million people.

Irrigation

IT IS ESTIMATED that the presently irrigated area in the developing world of 85 million hectares can be expanded by another 90 million

[12] Here is a detailed breakdown of the economics of the project:

The project consisted in putting under production 115 hectares of land devoted to the cultivation of tomatoes.

A yield of 546 cwt. per hectare was obtained and this produced 62,790 cwt. which was sold at US$1.50 and brought in the sum of US$94,185.00 in the first agricultural year.

The costs per hectare were US$577.20, the direct costs of cultivation totalling US$66,378.00. Out of this, US$4,320.00 were paid to the 30 agricultural workers participating as a labour force at the rate of US$2.00 per day during 24 days per month over a period of 3 months. US$62,050.00 were spent on other operational costs and agricultural expenses.

The capital investment reached $18,292.77 of which $3,060.00 related to enclosures and piping and $15,232.77 to irrigation equipment and plant.

There was a depreciation for this period of $1,829.28, taking 10 years as the time of use for the capital investment. Hence the direct profits from the cultivation were US$25,997.72, that is to say $225.89 per hectare. The economic surplus for the group was US$30,297.72, if we add to the profit the amount they obtained as payment for their labour. This gives an average profit of $263.46 per hectare.

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hectares. But the additional cost would be high: over $130 billion.[13]

However, unless a major irrigation project is now in the design stage it is unlikely to yield significant on-farm benefits before the late 1980s. Indeed there have been many cases in which it has taken ten years or more after a dam has been harnessed before the water begins to trickle down to the farmers.

Yet there is enormous potential in smaller schemes—tube-wells, low-level pumps, and small dams. Organised groups of small-holders can often afford these themselves. Between 1965 and 1971 peasant farmers in Pakistan installed more than 60,000 private tube-wells. The installation of each 5,000 tube-wells has added an estimated one million acre feet to the yearly supply of irrigation water.

Rural Industry

IN MY DISCUSSION of land reform it was pointed out that even the most equitably-minded scheme could not give land when it was not there: that in India, for example, there would still be 20–25 million landless farmers. A vibrant rural economy however, can, if the right structures are created, become a breeding ground for supportive economic activity. For a start: seeds, tools, fertiliser, and credit are needed. The provision and distribution of these all create local jobs. And as agricultural production increases, so must the processing facilities. All this raises the demand for jobs.

Then as farmers expand their production they increase their purchasing power; much, if not most, of their needs can be supplied by small-scale labour-intensive local industry. In the Pakistani Punjab, for example, where the demand for tube-wells and grain mills has grown exceedingly fast where new agricultural ideas have actually taken hold, small country towns have even grown into centres for the manufacture of diesel engines, and there are now 100 small engine-producing factories in the town of Dasca alone. (Unfortunately, these small-group manufacturers pay twice as much for some of their raw materials as larger firms. This is because they are not big enough to "qualify for an import licence" that would enable them to buy imported pig-iron at special prices.)

Various studies (made in India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Taiwan, Egypt, Chile, Mexico, Colombia, Ghana and Ethiopia) show that in many types of economic enterprise small units make more effective use of the factors of production than large ones, at least in the early stages of development. The Taiwan study (which compared small industries with an investment of under £25,000 with those having an investment of over $25 million) showed that each additional dollar invested in small plants created twice as much output as an additional dollar investment in the larger. Moreover, it showed that labour's share of income in the small plants was double that of the large ones.[14] These small enterprises are well suited for location in up-country towns.

Taiwan has followed a policy of keeping as much of its developments in the villages and small towns as possible. In the early 1960s Taiwan had only 34% of its industrial employment in its capital and regional cities where 22% of its total population lived. Colombia (under roughly comparable circumstances) had 75% of its industrial employment in its regional cities.[15]

Size of Industry by amount of Investment	*Investment Cost of Increasing output by $1.00*	*Labour's share of Income per $1.00*
Less than $2,500	$1.97	74c
$2,500–$25,000	$2.52	72c
$25,000–$250,000	$3.26	50c
$250,000–$2.5 million	$3.66	39c
More than $2.5 million	*$4.46*	31c

SOURCE: Hsieh and Lee, *Agricultural Development in Taiwan*, p. 97.

Even Europe's second most-developed country (in terms of *GNP* per head)—Switzerland—has only 35% of its people living in large towns. Industry has been integrated into the villages producing high-quality manufactured goods that depend *not on economics-of-scale* but on *the economics of skill*—and perhaps also the economics of producing *without a large supervisory bureaucracy*.

So what is needed in our world are small towns—small regional growth-centres that act as

[13] Robert McNamara, Address to the Board of Governors (World Bank 1973), p.21.
[14] E. Owens and R. Shaw, *Development Reconsidered* (1972), p. 116.
[15] James Grant, "Development: The End of Trickle Down", in *Foreign Policy* (No. 12, Fall 1973), p. 56.

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upstream dams stemming the flow of surplus labour to the big, impersonal, overweighted metropolises. In Barbara Ward's phrase, they constitute "counter magnets to megalopolis."

Besides the small town there are unlimited possibilities for employment opportunities in the countryside itself: ditch-digging, canals, dams, houses, roads. Yet all too often machine-oriented bureaucrats believe a bulldozer or an earth-remover can "do the job better." Lesotho, which has the worst soil-erosion problem in the world together with an appallingly high outflow of its young men to the South African mines, had all its valleys contoured (as an anti-erosion device) by giant Australian machines. Yet the job could have been done by hand, and as cheaply.

Extension, Research, Education

ALL THE GOOD IDEAS in the world are useless unless a way can be found to get them to the small farmer. There needs to be someone on hand who has the relevant information on improved seeds, fertiliser, rotation systems, agricultural tools, tube-wells, etc.—*and someone who preferably lives with the village people, knows their ways, and earns their trust.*

But where should they come from? The number of such people is abysmally low. In the developed countries the ratio of government agricultural agents to farm families is about 1 : 400. In developing countries it averages 1 : 8,000. Most of these concern themselves with the larger farmers. The projected number of trained personnel who will graduate annually from existing agricultural educational institutions will satisfy, at the most optimistic estimate, less than half the total needs of the Third World.

Research, too, is grossly undermanned. So much can be achieved through research programmes that seek out varieties of seed that resist disease and produce increased yields—the potential is enormous.

The new "miracle seeds" of the Green Revolution in Asia and Latin America have doubled yields. The World Bank rural development experts argue that tropical farms using the best of modern science, and seeking to maximise yield per hectare per day through multiple cropping, can attain yield increases of *six* to *sixteen* times present levels.

Yet for all the potential in this kind of scientific work, a World Bank sample (of 5 major developed and 5 major developing countries) found a wide contrast in research spending. In the rich countries, governments were giving $120–$150 per farm-family for research, in the developing countries it was only 50 cents–$2 per family.

Lurking behind these statistics of agricultural inadequacy is the educational system. There appears to be an appalling uniformity in them. Whether laid down by old colonial régimes or by new-nation governments, agriculture is simply not regarded as something worth teaching at school or university. Some developing countries have a surplus of university graduates—in general studies, law, and the arts! In India, for example, there are now so many unemployed graduates that it has become a national problem—yet they evidently would not consider the possibility of going to work in the villages. And it is the same for children who leave school after four years of education. They believe that this has at least earned them the right to turn their back on "primitive" village life. Agriculture is despised; it is "old-fashioned."

A study of a region in the Ivory Coast[16] showed graphically the situation that exists in numerous developing countries—*the higher the rate of education, the faster the exodus from the land.*

Educational level	Ratio of Exodus *Males*	*Females*
Illiterate	8	11
Literate	42	55
Primary School Certificate[1]	61	75

[1] *The Primary School Certificate is an examination taken after six years of primary schooling.*

Japan

IT IS POSSIBLE, or so it seems, to lay down a blue-print for effective action on the dispiriting World Food Crisis. The plans, one hopes, can be held refreshingly free from the dogmas of outmoded socialist and capitalist ideologies, and draw their strength from the strongest tradition in human experience: pragmatism. But, in practice, can the ideas I have been canvassing be applied? And, most important

[16] Louis Roussel, "Measuring rural-urban drift in developing countries: a suggested method", *International Labour Review* (Vol. 101, No. 3, March 1970), pp. 229.

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of all, can they be applied in time? A look at Japan, Brazil, Tanzania and China[17] helps us develop a rough answer to these questions.

THE FASCINATION of Japan is its success—the first Asian country to transform its rural sector into a dynamo of small-scale activity. It began where most of the Asian countries have to begin—with a feudalistic society dominated by hierarchical relationships. Its level of productivity was probably not very different from (or at best only moderately higher than) levels of productivity found today throughout Asia. The average farm-size was small.

Much of the Japanese success was achieved within the constraints of the old social order, although much was achieved by critical changes to parts of it. *Most important, however, was the fact that the breakthrough to high production was made without a transformation to large-scale agriculture.*

In 1878 the farm-size was approximately 1 hectare, and the yield of husked rice was about 1.8 metre tons per hectare. By 1960 the yield was 4 metre tons per hectare yet farm-size was still small (in fact, down to 0.8 hectares). During this time the annual growth rate of agriculture's net output averaged almost 2.3%, and the expansion of food crops was high enough to outstrip the growth rate of population. Even more impressive: the number of people on the land decreased only slightly. Between 1878 and 1912 the total agricultural work force moved from 15½ million to 14½ million.

Agriculture's achievement played a critical role in the development of the rest of the Japanese economy. Japan was self-sufficient in food, and could resist the pressures of inflation arising from food shortages. Tea and silk became important earners of foreign exchange, making it possible for Japan to buy-in the tools of industrialisation. Finally, the agricultural sector was (for a number of decades) the principal source of revenue for the central government and, in turn, government expenditure played an important role in the provision of services and facilities for the agricultural sector.

Before the so-called Meiji Restoration—the event that marked the beginning of the era of rapid modern reform—the fiscal structure of Japan was based on rice taxes (paid in kind by the peasant to the feudal lords). These amounted to 35% of the crop. The "Meiji" changed all this. In 1871 all land was made freely cultivable; and in 1872 it was declared to be freely transferable. The feudal tithes of 35% were abolished; in their place a new land tax was introduced, payable to the government, and it was about the same amount as the landlords took before. Now, however, it went into the government coffers and was spent on vast improvements to both agrarian and the urban economy. Unfortunately, the heavy burden of the land tax (the need to pay it in cash rather than kind) compelled many a small farmer to sell his land and accept tenancy under a landowner. Too often the old place of feudalism was taken over by a new landlordism.

The new landlordism was at least in commercial terms, a constructive one (or "progressive", if you wish). Since they received their rents in rice they had a vested interest in improving its quality—for they then received a better price in the market. Moreover, since the government's rake-off was a constant amount it encouraged the landlords to increase production in order to increase their capital. A good proportion of these new landlords' savings found their way into the new developing industries. During all this period the price of rice was rising, and this too was an incentive to produce more.

By and large, in this first round of land reform, the distribution of land between owner-cultivators and tenants was maintained. But the way was open for large-scale changes in agricultural technique—land improvement, better irrigation and drainage techniques, superior seeds, improved methods of crop cultivation, increased use of pesticides and fertilisers. All these factors began to be introduced fairly rapidly.

Although there was some early fascination with American and German agricultural methods these were quickly found to be quite inapplicable to the Japanese smallholder situation. Increasingly they relied on indigenous research. *Methods of farming evolved which required relatively little investment of fixed capital but which made full use of the abundant labour resources.* Average yield for the six staple crops increased by nearly 70% between 1880 and 1930. Net real output of the agricultural sector increased by approximately 150% between 1880 and 1938. However the estimated use of inputs only increased by 30%. Thus, technological advance leading to a rise in

[17] The observations on agriculture in Brazil and Tanzania are based on my own visits in 1973, 1974 and 1975; those on Japan and China are based on secondary sources.

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farm output per-unit-of-total-input appears to have made a major contribution to the increase in agricultural productivity.

And yet, for all these breakthroughs, the course of Japanese agricultural advance did not run smooth. At the time of the First World War the rate of growth dipped; shortages developed, and there was not enough food to feed the growing urban population.

The landownership system and the size of its holdings now seemed to be becoming limiting factors. It was Japan's defeat in the Second World War which provided the possibility of a new breakthrough. General MacArthur's U.S. occupation administration, eager to break up concentrations of power in Japanese society, set in motion a far-reaching agrarian reform that reduced the number of tenants and virtually eliminated absentee-ownership. The economic incentives of the tenants were sharply increased. All farmland owned by absentee-landlords and all farmland leased by resident landlords in excess of 1 hectare was bought by the government and redistributed.

The Land Reform programme was begun in 1947 and completed in 1949. As one would expect, the landlords fought bitterly to slow it down. They challenged the law in the courts, arbitrarily evicted tenants where they were not strong enough to resist, subdivided large estates among family members, and so on. But the American presence, *i.e.* a determined occupying force, for once allied with a modestly radical idea "whose time had come", pushed the scheme through. About 2 million hectares of farmland—amounting to 80% of the total cultivated land—was transferred to tenants.

THE END-RESULT OF THESE REFORMS was another great surge forward in Japanese agriculture. We should, however, note that there were certain other contributing factors: the dissolution of the Empire that ended colonial competition; food shortages on the world markets; new advances in technology; and a much more active government role in land reclamation and improvement.

In assessing the great achievements of Japanese agriculture it is important not to underplay the enormous back-up service provided by the government in return for its one-third levy. The organisation and systematic pursuit of agricultural research is one important example; and this was matched by a well-organised extension service that took the new technology *out into the villages*. Unlike the majority of developing countries the extension agents usually *lived* in the villages they served. Then there were the strong supporting institutions for the smaller farmers. Recognising that they were economically the weakest sector in the community and often faced great difficulties in marketing their product advantageously or in obtaining credit, the government helped establish a highly efficient network of Co-operatives. Nearly all the farmers now belong to these; and they extend into the smallest hamlet, bringing credit and marketing facilities to virtually every farmer.

Finally, there was the education system itself. Universal literacy came early to Japan. As early as 1879 some 44% of children of elementary-school age were actually in school. More important still was the rapid expansion of "technical supplementary schools"—for most of these gave great emphasis to topics useful to agriculture. Agriculture was not regarded as "second best" but as a key element in the development of a new and prosperous Japanese society.

One other aspect of the Japanese development experience is crucial—the application of labour-intensive techniques in the non-agricultural sector. Many of the important new industries were actually located in the countryside—not just agriculture-related industries (like processing, silk reeling, and weaving) but industries of a more varied character. In many instances small-scale industries were lined up with the larger and more capital-intensive industries through the production of components.

Although the story of Japanese agriculture is one of a remarkable success one must not forget that Japan has at least three advantages over other countries trying to achieve a similar success today. First, although population was growing it did so only at a rate of 0.7 to 1.5%—or about the same as in Europe during its early stages of economic development. These rates just do not compare with what is happening in the Third World. Secondly, Japan's first initiative was taken at a time of rapidly growing agricultural trade. Thirdly, Japan has a well-watered and temperate climate. (Even so Japan's methods have been transported successfully to the very different climate of Taiwan, though only after a fairly lengthy period of preliminary research.)

Set against these advantages is the fact that modern technology is now much more advanced than when Japan began her unique agricultural

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revolution. Yields can be raised much faster today than was conceivable in Japan 100 years ago, and so perhaps what has been historically lost on the roundabouts can be regained on the scientific swings.

Brazil

BRAZIL IS ONE of the few countries in the developing world that still has a plentiful supply of land on which continued expansion of output can be achieved, even without significant improvements in agricultural technology. After a long period during which the government misplaced all its emphasis on "industrialisation", it is now shifting gear to throw much more of its resources in the direction of agriculture. The government believes that with industrial capacity almost fully utilised it will be easier to sustain high rates of overall economic growth if agricultural growth rates of 6–7% are achieved. It is also persuaded that, given the relative abundance of land and labour, it can expand agriculture with a lower investment rate than would be possible with a heavier reliance on industry.

The emerging conviction holds that, for the foreseeable future, the best chances for increasing productivity and output lie in aiding the larger farmers in the better-off regions. So most of the governmental support is to go to the already successful commercial farmers. This approach may solve Brazil's food problem in the round. But it will do nothing for the regional disparities—it will do nothing to stop urban drift (it could exacerbate it)—it will certainly do nothing for the poor.

When I stared at the Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro skyscrapers it was sometimes difficult to remember just how abysmally poor much of Brazil still is. Yet 23 million Brazilians suffer from hookworm; 1.85 million have goitre; 1 million trachoma; 600,000 leprosy. A child dies every 42 seconds, and every ten years 6 million Brazilians under 16-years-of-age are taken to the cemetery. . . .

The North-east, although not Brazil's poorest region, is the one with the most severe and intractable social problems. I was told that its land distribution is "the most unequal in the world"—in the state of Marauhao 71% of farmers have only 3.9% of the wealth whereas 1.2% have 61.5% In Pernambuco 65.3% of the small farmers have 4.6% of the wealth, leaving 61.7% for only 2.4%. In Rio Grande do Norte 58.4% have 3.8% of the wealth, and 1.8% have 60.3%.

The system of *latifundia* and share-cropping still operates much the same as it did 400 years ago. In one of the north-eastern states (Rio Grande do Norte) there is a new pilot-project (established by the World Bank) set up to see if it is possible, despite all the old and new difficulties, to make small-holder peasant-farming work. The fact that the "imperialist" World Bank has even been allowed to do this is due no doubt to the amount of favour they have won in aiding over the years Brazil's more conventional growth-policies. Yet, despite this caveat, it is worth looking at what they are trying to do if only to see the nature of the problems that such an experiment raises.

The Bank project is set in the drought polygon of Brazil. Apart from a narrow coastal strip the rainfall is poor and erratic: at least once a decade there is an extreme drought and thousands upon thousands of destitute people pour into the towns seeking work and relief. Population is growing at 2.9% a year (but reduced to 1.5% through emigration). The per-capita income is about $180 a year compared with Brazil's average $600; and for the poorest half of the population it is nearer $50.

Many of the large *haciendas* are under-utilised: owners are often absent. Share-croppers have to surrender $\frac{1}{3}$–$\frac{1}{2}$ of their cash crop (usually cotton) in lieu of rent; and crop yields are going down because of the ravages of erosion and the decline in soil fertility. The regional government is badly organised, operating on a hand-to-mouth basis, policies and personnel changing frequently. Extension agents I met in the countryside told me they sometimes fail to get paid for 3–6 months at a time. Agricultural research is limited: I saw one small 1-man cotton research-station and a 2-man coconut research-station. So far as I could establish, fertilisers have only been in use in the last two years or so.

Until quite recently the government's principal strategy has been to try and create jobs in the industrial sector. Using fiscal incentives it has only (since 1960) been able to create 15,000 jobs a year; and each job cost $12,000. This is a very expensive way to develop a depressed region, and one of the aims of the experiment is to show just how much cheaper it will be *to create jobs in the rural sector.*

The project will attempt to work with 35,000 farmers, and has as its main aims: (1) establishment of 4 marketing co-ops; (2) a significant

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expansion in extension services; (3) a simplification of credit procedures and the availability of this credit together with technological inputs (fertiliser, insecticide, improved seeds, etc.) plus supporting services to small producers and share-croppers; (4) health training, nutrition.

If the aim of the project is to reach the share-croppers and small *minifundistas*, there are at least two weaknesses in it. First, in its initial steps at least, it has accepted that it can do little for the landless and for those with plots of land too small to be economic. And, secondly, it has accepted that for the next few years it will have to accept the archaic and debilitating system of land tenure; that politically, it would be "counter-productive" to push for such basic changes. Perhaps, it is argued, these limitations can be overcome by a number of innovative measures. First, by providing certain counterbalancing institutions like co-operatives for the share-croppers. Secondly, to introduce some form of contractual arrangement (enforceable in the law courts) between landlord and tenant that will give the tenant a fair return for any improvements he might make. Possibly once one has introduced a certain impetus to agricultural improvement it will be easier to implement those far-reaching land-reform decisions which are already on the statute books.

This, if you like, is rural development the hard way. Yet it is on this kind of project—and the Tanzanian one—that the World Bank wants to assist the governments of the developing countries in a world-wide drive to get the output of peasant smallholders increasing by 5% a year by 1985. It remains to be seen if it can be done in a country where the political institutions are so heavily weighted against the poor and down-trodden.

Tanzania

TANZANIA is surely remarkable not for what it has accomplished, but for what it is doing and what it intends to do. It appears to be the only Third World country today (apart from China) that has unambiguously decided that its principal hope for development lies in its villages. One of the poorest countries in Africa—with a per capita annual income of only $86—has (under the leadership of its first president, Julius Nyerere) consciously set out to evolve a policy of development that emphasises the rural poor at the expense of the town dweller. Salaries of politicians and civil servants have been cut, university students have been enrolled *en masse* in a national service corps that is sent into the villages for a year's service, school curricula have been rewritten so that agriculture becomes a principal subject, and the President himself constantly emphasises the goals of rural development (and on occasion leaves his desk to go out and dirty his hands digging an irrigation ditch).

This agricultural policy revolves around what are called "*Ujamaa*" villages (literally translated, this means "familyhood"). Nyerere has argued that the traditional scattered smallholdings of much of the Tanzanian countryside are an unsuitable form of rural settlement. It makes the communication of new ideas difficult and people become "too individualistic." But, he argues, if they come together in villages and pool their land they can more easily maximise their productivity. Farmers can be reached with credit, advice, and expertise. A dispensary can be built; so can a school; machinery such as mills and tractors can be shared, and the overhead costs of running them distributed more easily. The farmers can be organised into co-operatives which will arrange both the purchase of new seeds and fertilisers and the sales and marketing of their output.

There was one other important element in the *Ujamaa* villages: that they should be infused with the spirit of the Arusha Declaration. This declaration, written principally by Nyerere, was adopted by Tanzania's single political party, TANU, at a party congress in 1967. Its philosophy is summed up by a passage Nyerere wrote in 1962:

> "Acquisitiveness for the purpose of gaining power and prestige is unsocialist. In an acquisitive society wealth tends to corrupt those who possess it. It tends to breed in them a desire to live more comfortably than their fellows, to dress better, and in every way to outdo them. They begin to feel they must climb as far above their neighbours as they can. The visible contrast between their own comfort and the comparative discomfort of the rest of society becomes almost essential to the enjoyment of their wealth, and this sets off the spiral of personal competition—which is then anti-social. . . .
>
> "Both the 'rich' and the 'poor' individual were completely secure in African society. Natural catastrophe brought famine, but it brought famine to everybody—'poor' or 'rich.' Nobody starved, either of food or of human dignity, because he lacked personal wealth; he could depend on the wealth possessed by the community of which he was a member. That was socialism. That is socialism. There can be no such thing as acquisitive socialism, for that would be another contradiction

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> in terms. Socialism is essentially distributive. Its concern is to see that those who sow reap a fair share of what they sow."[18]

That is the theory. And the practice?

It is now estimated that about half of Tanzania's population live in *Ujamaa* villages. They vary in size from 30 to 1,800 persons, but the average size is about 70 families.

The villages have tended to be located where there is extensive uncultivated land. In this way the collective field system (*Ujamaa shamba*) has been established without threatening existing patterns of private cultivation. It is not surprising then that the *Ujamaa* villages are located in the poorest part of the country. The six regions of Tanzania with the highest per-capita *GNP* account for less than 10% of the *Ujamaa* people, whereas the five poorest regions have 70%.

Despite the relatively harsh environment the *Ujamaa* villages have a number of compensatory attractions. The villages receive priority in the allocation of extension personnel: water development; health facilities; schools and co-operative services; and once they are fully established they are eligible for production credit. This is the principal difference between *Ujamaa* and the Chinese system. One depends principally on incentive, (although this is beginning to change), the other on compulsion. Yet, for all the political pushing and prodding that has gone on, the *Ujamaa* villages are still very much in an early stage. There is "collective farming" but it probably represents less than 1% of the total cultivated area. And where there are *Ujamaa shambas*, yields are constantly reported to be less than the yields on private plots. There are many indications, too, which suggest that people are "going *Ujamaa*" not so much because they believe in the communal ideal but because of the priority accorded the villages in government services.

Goran Hyden (Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Dar es Salaam) believes that many of the basic principles of *Ujamaa* are not being adhered to in practice.[19] Instead of an "Arusha" attitude of self-reliance there is a great danger that villagers are becoming *more*, not less, dependent on government. Government officials are often sent to organise the construction of local amenities—a task which could usually be organised just as effectively by peasants when they are not needed for work on the fields.

Also, as a matter of hard realistic fact, it is the regional officials who set the investment targets for each village, and not the peasants themselves. In many cases these bureaucratic officers are quite out of touch with the resource needs and the potential productivity of an area. Mismanagement occurs, and some farmers feel frustrated that the vaunted "decision-making" is taken out of their hands.

Since the beginning of 1974 the Government has placed great emphasis on the need to move people into *Ujamaa* villages at any cost. Moving is no longer a matter of "providing incentives", it is just compulsory. If resistance is met (according to Hyden) then those farmers' homesteads could be burnt down. (I also questioned Nyerere about this. He did not attempt to deny that it "occasionally happens.") However, at the same time, the government has given up its insistence on communal production. This is a response to the sharp drop in food production which these sudden shifts of population combined with drought have brought about.

FOR ALL THE DEFICIENCIES and mistakes, do the *Ujamaa* villages offers the possibility of real agricultural change? The basic conception is not unsound. The political leadership of the country is not dogmatic and I found that new ideas are welcome. It is no open-and-shut situation.

Certainly it is an enormous improvement on the old colonial pattern of agricultural development inherited by Tanzania when it became independent in 1962. The British Empire introduced high-priced export crops like tobacco, coffee, and tea; this certainly increased the low level of incomes quite sharply. But it also built up concentrations of wealth in small pockets of the country; and moreover, peasant farmers who grew cash-crops often neglected their production of food crops, preferring to buy these in the market places. The "cash economy" began to take over, and one of the ironies of this kind of development is that it is the areas with the most successful cash-cropping that have the highest out-migration to the town. Peasants who have money in their pockets are evidently more attracted to the bright lights than those whose pockets are empty.

By emphasising village culture and its social potential, will *Ujamaa* do something to bring the attractiveness of the "bright lights" to the countryside? Will these villages emerge less

[18] Julius Nyerere, *Ujamaa—The Basis of African Socialism* (1962).

[19] Goran Hyden "Ujamaa, Villagisation and Rural Development in Tanzania" '*ODI Review*, No. 1, 1975.'

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dependent on the outside cash economy? Will they succeed in growing their own food crops and introduce new sources of food like fruit trees, chickens, and cows? Small-scale industries can be introduced—carpentry, grain and oil milling, charcoal and brick manufacture, textiles and ginning. In these ways it should be possible to develop the economy *in situ* without the enormous social upheavals that result when there is long-distance migration and large-scale industrialisation and division of labour.

Tanzania also sees the need for "regional growth centres"—small towns that can both absorb the surplus rural population (for, obviously, in the long run there is a limit to the numbers the countryside can hold) and provide counter-magnets to the pull of Dar es Salaam.

The World Bank, attempting to put into practice its new commitment to the small farmer, has been investigating the potential of these *Ujamaa* villages; and its observations on their potential are encouraging for Tanzania. The Bank is now strongly supporting an *Ujamaa* village scheme involving 250,000 people in the Kigoma region. Its financial contribution will be spent on the inputs of new improved seed and fertiliser, marketing and credit systems, extension services, agricultural research, social services, irrigation and access roads. This aid will amount to $225 per family, of which Tanzania will provide 25%.

The World Bank officials I talked to appeared to be confident that within ten years village-and-family-income could be doubled. (At the moment per-capita annual income in Kigoma is $20, well below Tanzania's average.) They also reckon that the economic rate-of-return on the project will be 22% a year—which, of course, is well above what a private investor would hope to get out of the average industrial enterprise (admittedly however his risks in industry would be much lower).

Although these figures suggest that the World Bank officials have an enormous amount of confidence in the potential of Peasant Farming, *Ujamaa*-style, it should be noted that calculations of this kind are highly sensitive (and the World Bank's President, Robert MacNamara, is surely a burnt child with miscalculation). If yields increased by 75% instead of the planned 100% the rate of return would be zero—and if they increased by 80% the rate of return would be only 5%. . . . It is much too early to say whether the *Ujamaa* villages will succeed or not. But many of the omens are good.

Even if *Ujamaa* itself fails an important step forward will have been taken. Agriculture is clearly the priority of Tanzania. Even if Tanzania in the end relies on individual peasants farming and responding to material incentives it is relatively simple to prohibit richer peasants from emerging and buying out the others. All that is needed is a law prohibiting the hiring of labour. If a peasant has that limit firmly imposed on him then he is allowed to develop his initiative and enterprise only to the point where it does not intrude on the wider ambitions and purpose of society. *Ujamaa* certainly should be tried but if it fails there is a good second-best alternative to fall back on.

China

CHINA is about the same size as India. Yet it supports—without famine or starvation, and only rarely resorting to net food imports—a population half as big again, and that alone is a measure of its achievement.

China has done this by a repetition of the Japanese experience, *i.e.* a high level of investment based on heavy taxation of the agricultural sectors. But because of the serious overcrowding on the land (and, perhaps, more drastic authoritarian predilections), more severe coercion than that used in Japan was employed to produce the same results.

The Chinese agricultural system, as everyone knows, is rooted in "the Commune." It is important, however, to understand how the system evolved because communes, as they are known today, were not introduced until 1958.

Land reform—always in Bolshevik terminology an ambivalent concept—proceeded in a number of different steps. The first came immediately after Mao's seizure of power. Feudalistic arrangements in land ownership were abolished, and the 70% of the land held by the landlords and rich peasants was given to the poorer peasants and the landless. Mao and his associates saw this as a step backwards; but presumably it had to be done to confirm the peasant's trust in the promise of the Revolution.

Mao's real revolution began with the introduction of co-operative farming among a peasantry to whom the very concept of co-operation was almost totally alien. Between 1949 and 1952, in an attempt to try and minimise the deficiencies of farm units that were often too small to be economic, mutual-aid teams were introduced.

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These, in turn, were superseded between 1955 and 1957 by "Elementary Agricultural Producers Co-operatives." They gave way to "Advance Co-ops" which, although successful in pooling resources, were not considered large enough to deal with the economic and administrative functions of a region. So in 1958 the Commune system was established, and what remained of the land reform's individual peasant ownership came to an end. One observer of Chinese affairs has written,

> "Mao and his party triumphed where Stalin and his party cruelly failed, basically because Mao understood and trusted the peasantry, believing that while they could never be pushed into new ways, they would recognise their real interest and respond to the opportunities the co-operative path would open. Step by step, with setbacks whenever Communist officials forgot Mao's injunction and began to push and chivvy, the peasants moved into increasingly co-operative forms. . . ."[20]

Be that as it may, communes are not just farming units—they are responsible for a region's administrative and organisational functions. They are also political power-bases, and the Chinese claim that there are about 76,000 communes.

Farming operations are basically controlled at the brigade and team (village) level. Certain incentives, although not extreme, are built into the communal system. Different kinds of operation earn "work points", and a man's wages (paid in kind and cash) depend on the total work points earned in a month. However, the rate at which work points are paid is related to the total income of the commune, so there is both individual and communal incentive. There may well be peasant wisdom in Mao's injunction that every advance in production should be reflected in improvement in the peasant's incomes. There is also a residual "private sector." In general people live in their own houses, and they own small plots on which they grow vegetables and raise poultry and pigs.

Yet for all the room for manoeuvre for private individual effort, the highest income is said to be never more than twice the lowest. Rich communes are also taxed to help the poorer ones.

THE REAL TEST, of course, is whether the system "works"—above all, does it feed, clothe, and house people, for that is the dominant question in Asia today. Here China scores heavily. The average income for China appears to be, in terms of real purchasing power, several times higher than in India and Pakistan, and something like 50–100% higher than in Thailand, Philippines, and Indonesia.[21]

China has also confronted the seemingly endemic Asian disease of high rural underemployment. Dikes and dams have been built; irrigation channels dug and roads constructed; seasonally unemployed labour is used in land improvement, flood control and water management. The use of irrigation and yield-improving techniques are also important factors in the Chinese countryside. In the twenty years 1951–71, the proportion of irrigated land as a percentage of the total arable land in China is said to have increased from 20 to 78%.

Yields have gone up in the better communes from 700 pounds to 4 tons a hectare, the national average being about 2.5 tons per hectare. Grain production (which was 108 millions in 1949) was some 250 millions by 1971. Apart from the very exceptional bad year of 1972, China would now appear to be self-sufficient in grain. Although she imports in quantity terms more wheat than she exports rice, there is in the end—owing to rice's higher value—a positive financial balance.

If China has solved its food problem, it has also succeeded in making the countryside the primary focus of economic activity. The rural economy is the cutting edge of Chinese economic development. After a false start down the disastrous Soviet road in the 1950s, China has treated agriculture as its most important sector.

Enormous efforts have been made to attract industry out of the town and into the countryside —even to the point of excess. One remembers the grotesque attempt to set up backyard steel works during the Cultural Revolution. But there has also been reported the successful introduction of sugar refineries, milk powder plants, paper mills, processing units for cotton ginning and edible oils, agricultural machinery factories and workshops, and even fertiliser plants.

A Concluding Remark

ON PAPER, then, we can prove that it can be done in this very world of crisis, contradictions and run-away social forces. People can be held on the land; urbanisation can be

[20] Neville Maxwell, in the *Sunday Times*, 8 December, 1974.
[21] Sataj Aziz, "The Chinese Approach to Rural Development", *International Development Review* (1973).

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stopped in its mad rush to a barbarous catastrophe; agricultural production can be made to feed everyone. But for pragmatists the theory is not enough. How goes the practice?

First, the money. The World Bank estimates the annual cost (of on-farm investment, land- and water-resource development, additional training facilities, and minimum capital requirements) will be $100 billion over ten years. This calculation is based on the assumption that expenditure is concentrated on the 700 million small farmers, share-croppers, and landless workers who are the bottom 40% of the Third World, and that this will put the rural poor on the road to an annual 5% growth in productivity. This is not much, when compared with the estimated $170 billion total investment, public and private, in developing countries in 1974, but quite a lot, when measured against the total annual investment of the lower-income countries where the poor are concentrated—a mere $25 billion in this case.

Some of the resources are waiting to be tapped in the developing countries themselves—from the farmers who can generate additional saving once their escalator of growth begins to move; and from the exchequers of the central governments who so often misallocate their resources. But some—a good proportion—must come from the rich countries of the West and from OPEC. OPEC's proposal for a new $1.25 million fund for agricultural development is obviously a most welcome and significant first step.

It is also going to require political will—and a very special political will of the kind that favours the poor and the underprivileged in their unspectacular attempt to humanise their brutal world. It is in short supply.

I HAVE TENDED IN THIS ARTICLE to concentrate on the technological and administrative changes (and the accompanying changes in intellectual attitudes) that have to be made, but this approach may well be short-sighted. My analysis assumes that the present political structures favour the liberation of the poor farmers. Can it be that all that is needed to be done is to present a coherent programme (like the one I have tried to sketch) for authority to be convinced? Would that reality were all that simple! There are too many with a vested interest in the present order for changes of this kind to be easily introduced. Who could be so blind as not to see, for example, landlords sitting in the world's places of power and men of greed occupying chairs in government offices?

More than that. Too often such Western private investment as there is works unwittingly to the disadvantage of the poor. It helps, with its vaunted capital-intensive techniques, to build up a small yet powerful privileged urban minority—both upper working- and middle-class—that pressures the pliable and gullible new nation-state planners to concentrate resources on the towns.

YET WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE, the Third World must choose its own models of development. To be sure, a free choice is made more difficult by all the outside pressures that bear in on them, but these are not insuperable. Given the vision and the will, new assessments can be intellectually made for a journey in new directions. The question remains: which direction?

I have heard it said, more and more, at the highest levels of the Development Establishment —in the FAO, the World Bank, and the Universities—that "the Chinese have shown the way." Have they not given priority to people in the countryside? have they not discouraged migration and rapid urbanisation? by and large, haven't they kept everyone adequately fed? And this at a time when population pressures were so much more severe than they ever were in old Japan. . . .

I do not mean to turn a deaf ear to the examination of what the Chinese have done and how they have done it. Yet I would advise a modicum of caution. Even if it were in every respect desirable (and this is far from being the case), how difficult it would be to transplant a Chinese political system into another culture! "Can one imagine the Italians adopting the British political system," one old Eurasian hand said to me, "much less the Indians adopting the Chinese?" Our ideologised experts tend to look at things from far off, and they consistently underestimate the vast differences in cultural and indeed human make-up.

And, to introduce an additional note of scepticism, how complete and reliable is our information on China? Do we know what price, in terms of suffering and the loss of individual and eternally human freedoms, has been paid by the Chinese people for such economic and social advantages as they may well now enjoy?

Is there another "Third World" direction to be found in the Tanzanian pattern? I was struck by the fact that the *Ujamaa* village idea depended much more on persuasion and incentive (despite

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the recent changes in emphasis) than the commanding Chinese way. Yet we can see that progress is painfully slow. Tanzania, which does not have insufferable population pressures, can afford the luxury of time—other countries, particularly those in Asia, cannot.

THERE IS, I AM AWARE, a certain note of pessimism inherent in these conclusions. If China, for many good and sufficient reasons, is unlikely to be carbon-copied around the Third World, Tanzania at the moment is still an idea—vaguely appealing, but lacking at present in sufficient substance to be widely emulated. If the Japanese way is taken to be part of the past, there is for its partisans the topical advantage of a modern-day repeat performance in Taiwan. But for all the doubts and reservations, the moral of the tale is clear and obvious—a way must be found quickly of turning the priorities of the developing countries in the direction of the countryside. For that is where the root of the problem is to be found. Even if the syncretistic model is to be an eclectic blend of China, Japan, Taiwan, Tanzania, and World Bankism, nothing good can move forward without the will to think anew. But first must come the will.

The Stethoscope

Through it,
over young women's abdomens tense,
I have heard the sound of creation
and, in a dead man's chest, the silence
before creation began.

Should I
pray therefore? Hold this instrument in awe
and aloft a procession of banners?
Hang this thing in the interior
of a cold, mushroom-dark church?

Should I
kneel before it, chant an apophthegm
from a small text? Mimic priest or rabbi,
the swaying noises of religious men?
Never! Yet I could praise it.

I should
by doing so celebrate my own ears,
by praising them praise speech at midnight
when men become philosophers;
laughter of the sane and insane;

night cries
of injured creatures, wide-eyed or blind;
moonlight sonatas on a needle;
lovers with doves in their throats; the wind
travelling from where it began.

Dannie Abse

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Jan Morris

From the Home of the Dodo

Letter from Mauritius

SERENDIPITY took me to Mauritius. Inspecting in Crickhowell Post Office the album issued by Cadbury's Chocolates to contain their coupons of airline badges, I discovered that the island lay upon the scheduled airline route between Australia and South Africa. Since I was about to leave for those parts, I re-routed myself at once, and so found myself one sultry afternoon at latitude 20.24 south, longitude 57.42 east, at the elevated tip of that part of the Indian Ocean seabed known as the Mascarene Ridge.

I locate it precisely, because my experience is that almost nobody knows where Mauritius is, and not everybody has the Cadbury's album. I did not know myself until I looked on the map. Was it, say, north or south of the Equator? Was it nearer India or Africa? Was it anywhere near the Seychelles? In fact it is almost an offshore island of Madagascar. It is 1500 miles south of the Equator, and a thousand miles from the Seychelles, and is twice as near the African continent as it is to the southern tip of India. Its nearest neighbour is the French island La Réunion, and it is more or less on a line with Bulawayo to the west or Brisbane to the east.

In short Mauritius is a tropical island of the Indian Ocean, and having an old distaste for such palm-fringed paradises, I went there in a spirit more of duty than elation. It looked enticing enough in the Cadbury's album, but I knew the old deception of green on blue. Besides, was it not the home of the Dodo? Look what happened to him.

BUT IT TURNED OUT TO BE something different. Mauritius has an oddly disquieting, transient quality very different from the Bahaman or Fijian norm. In the middle of the island there is an extinct volcano, Trou aux Cerfs, whose rim was long ago turned into a country promenade, popular with early morning joggers and sunset suitors, and whose deep green interior is frequented by women in saris searching (so I was creditably assured) for the small succulent fish that live in the rainwater pools at the bottom. I often walked up to this place from my hotel in Curepipe, and tried hard, as I surveyed its magnificent view, to get the hang of the place, and resolve its obscurities.

There is no denying the beauty of it. Darwin thought it an *elegantly* constructed island, and though I still have doubts about the origin of our species, I do agree with him there. From Trou aux Cerfs one can see it all in silhouette, an almost circular country of sweeps, curves and curious peaks, its mountain ranges disposed in a graceful disorder as though Capability Brown had arranged them. Some of it is a deep wild green, much is golden with sugar cane, and everywhere the uplands protrude, sometimes in long whale-back ridges, sometimes abruptly like mole-hills or barrows from the plain. Mauritius is bigger than most of your paradises, having a circumference of 135 miles, with an area about the same as Berkshire, and a population rather smaller than Leeds.

Most of it is fine open country, with wide reaches of down and moorland, where deer roam (and are enthusiastically hunted), where monkeys gabble, where wild boars snort, where small lakes lie darkly in the sunshine, where dirt roads lead inconsequentially nowhere and shrubby thickets mark the passage of springs and streams. Most of it is high, too, so that gusts of fresh wind often blow ebulliently off the sea, in happy antidote to the latitude.

It is a gentlemanly landscape, and Mauritius is not yet degraded by its tourism. Its resort hotels are not yet ubiquitous, its steel bands can be evaded, and it possesses a sense of reality which, though hazy to me still, is certainly more potent than the tinsel illusions of the holiday trade.

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The ships that come to Mauritius are seldom jazzy cruise ships, but are real freighters, tankers or Japanese trawlers. A Russian cruiser lay off-shore when I first went up to Trou aux Cerfs, and its presence there long, grey and lean beyond the harbour of Port Louis seemed to give the place an unexpected consequence (though I enjoyed the address, all the same, in the local diplomatic list, of His Excellency Mohammed Ezz-el-Din Sharif, Egyptian Ambassador and Plenipotentiary to this perhaps less than crucial State: *c/o The Foreign Office, Cairo*).

MOST TROPICAL ISLANDS are essentially ordinary, and are picturesque only by contrast or unfamiliarity. Mauritius is not ordinary at all. It is a very odd island, and I presently came to realise, after long contemplations on Trou aux Cerfs, that this oddity had something to do with *time*. Until the end of the 17th century nobody lived on Mauritius. There is therefore nothing terribly old on the island—no aboriginal artifacts in inescapable collections, no uncontradictable authorities on native folk-art, no last descendant of forest dynasties to show you his press cuttings. Mauritius has little sense of the past. The mountains themselves look newish to me, and the landscape as a whole has a contemporary air. Even the map reference, I think, suggests that the divine creator, somewhat late on the third day, had to look fairly hard on the globe to find a vacancy for the island. It is a fond Mauritian fantasy that somewhere in the hills a last Dodo family survives, undisturbed among the eucalyptus groves: but though I kept my eyes open always, somehow I doubt it. Mauritius seems to me a place without many secrets. It is peculiar, but not I think especially subtle. In some ways I thought it rather obvious.

NO REMARK could be more infuriating to the Franco-Mauritians, who are the oldest and snootiest community on the island. They pride themselves, of course, upon the extreme subtlety and specialness of their culture. The French, who took the island from the Dutch in 1715, ruled it for a century under the name L'Ile de France. They ceded it to the British in 1814, but many of them have never been quite reconciled to the transfer. How, I asked one eminent Franco-Mauritian sage, did the French islanders generally regard the British administrators of Mauritius? "With benevolent contempt", he replied, and he threw me a theatrically disdainful look, like a teacher of dramatic art demonstrating techniques of emotion.

I like this sort of thing, but then I like overseas Frenchmen of the old kind, the kind who talk about their civilising mission, and wear ribbons in their lapel on Bastille Day. *France Outremer* is alive and well in Mauritius. In Port Louis one may still find balconied Provençal houses behind high-walled gardens in sun-bleached lanes, or drink coffee with family solicitors from Lyons beneath mounted antlers in dark-panelled offices, or even read the third oldest daily French newspaper in the world, *Le Cernéen*, in the reading-room of L'Institut. The exquisite little theatre of Port Louis was in fact built by the British; but if you sneak into the wings during a Saturday rehearsal, so resonantly do the French theatrical voices echo among the rafters, so determined is the talk of Sartre, Molière or Anouilh, that you might well think yourself backstage in some Théâtre Municipale of Seine or Languedoc.

Often I met one of the old Frenchmen, presiding over a bookshop, hard at work among the stuffed lizards of the museum, or presiding over the teacups of a hillside villa. After two centuries of exile they remain ineradicably French, with that paradoxical mixture of the truly urbane and the provincially patronising that is the hallmark of the *colon* everywhere. Some of them are, after all these generations, actually French nationals, and nearly all are of the opinion that they order things better in France. They are curiously double-rooted. They are rooted in Mauritius to a degree that few Englishmen in tropical parts have ever achieved: but they are tenaciously rooted in France too, believe the French culture to be the most truly elevating force of all, and often end their observations with the clincher "As we say in France, . . ."

More remarkable, though, and truer still to this island's strangely unpossessive character, is the way in which young Franco-Mauritians mirror no less faithfully the condition of their remote fatherland. Six thousand miles from France, a country few of them have ever visited, the young islanders look exactly like the post-Gaullean generation in France itself—hard, that is, arrogant, a little graceless, but full of confidence and vigour. They race about the island in sports-cars, they lounge in jeans in cafés, they smoke between courses, and nobody could

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suppose them to be anything but French. Yet they are very Mauritian too: for they look as though they have no conscious sense of history or heritage, but live entirely for the moment, intuitively.

UP ON THE HILL ONE EVENING I noticed in the garden of a house in Curepipe what appeared to be, from that distance, a life-size replica of the Eiffel Tower. I sought out the house, and though the edifice turned out to be rather smaller than the original in fact, still I knocked on the door to ask its history. Its owner was one of those new Franco-Mauritians, shirt-sleeved and modernist, who has made his fortune by wine-making—he imports dried grapes from South Africa and turns them into a passable and profitable *vin ordinaire*.

Well, he said with a charming casualness, he didn't know much about that tower. He rather thought it was one of several replicas distributed through *France Outremer* when the real Eiffel Tower was constructed. When he bought the house a few years ago, he simply discovered that the tower went with it. Did I like it? Some people said he ought to pull it down, but he found it rather agreeable on the whole, and decorated it with fairy lights when he had garden parties. For a moment I thought he might offer it to me as a souvenir, so dispassionate was his attitude; and when I mentioned the tower to other people in the neighbourhood, nobody seemed to have noticed it.

IN MAURITIUS even the British presence, elsewhere so full-blooded, seems watered-down. I spent one afternoon wandering around Le Reduit, the country home of the British Governors of the island. Without doubt one of the nicest of all the British Empire's gubernatorial mansions, this is a properly Mauritian palimpsest itself. It was built by the French as a refuge to which women and children could flee when pirates or Englishmen raided the coast, and it retains much of the low-slung, shuttered, measured grace of a French country house. Over 150 years, though, the British set their own stamp upon it—a tentative if elegant stamp, an amateur, croquet-and-teacup stamp, best expressed I thought by the quotations from Virgil on the garden seats, and the elegiac couplets on the sun-dial in front of the house:

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN!
For loyalty is still the same
Whether it win or lose the game,
True as the Dial to the Sun,
Although it be not shone upon.

Long before they lost the imperial game, the Britishness of Mauritius was pretty thin. Few Britons ever settled in Mauritius, and only the top echelon of the administration was British. There were no Oxonian District Commissioners in this outpost of Empire, no hard-drinking planters in half-timbered clubs, no captains of irregular cavalry, no memsahibs intriguing in hill stations. The imperial ethos hardly applied to Mauritius. "I really sometimes wonder", one French lady observed to me distantly, "why you ever bothered to come": and though before the opening of the Suez Canal Mauritius was an important coaling station, in the climactic years of the Pax Britannica its imperial purpose really was distinctly peripheral. Even that bible of high imperialism, *The Empire and the Century* (1906) never mentions the island, and Professor Meiklejohn's omniscient survey of the Empire in 1895 gives it only a paragraph under "Islands Connected With Africa", though it devotes a full-page map in three colours to the vegetable products of India.

And Professor Meiklejohn was right, though he might better have listed Mauritius under Islands Connected With India, for it was one of those innumerable dependencies which the British acquired merely as ancillaries to the Raj. When India fell the Empire fell, like a gigantic house of cards, gently, sometimes almost imperceptibly; and no modest card fell softer, or less affected the stakes, than the Crown Colony of Mauritius.

OF ALL THE EX-POSSESSIONS I know, Mauritius seems to have absorbed most unemotionally the fact of independence. The break with Britain happened so gently, and the umbilical cord was so fragile anyway, that hardly anyone seemed to notice it. Did you? I never did. One day, it seems to me, Mauritius was governed by His Excellency Sir John Rennie, GCMG; the next day Mr John Stonehouse was seeking asylum there in a plea to his old friend, the Mauritian Minister of Health. One year Mauritius was scarcely more than a 2d blue in Stanley Gibbons' Commonwealth catalogue (*Unused*, £12,000); the next year it was, says *The Statesman's Year-Book*, "an independent

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State and a monarchical member of the Commonwealth."

Even on the island independence is not assertive, still less chauvinist or resentful. An Englishman is still Controller at Le Reduit. Another is Secretary to the Cabinet. A third is the island's controller of information, and a fourth commands the police. H.M.S. *Mauritius*, a Royal Navy shore-base, still flourishes next door to the Gymkhana Club at Vacoas. The Port Louis statues of Queen Victoria and Governor Pope-Hennessy, though vastly outnumbered by images of renowned indigenes, are respectfully maintained, and indeed seem recently to have been coated with some greenish preservative which gives them a phosphorescent, almost ethereal look. The guest quarters at Le Reduit are still called "The Admiral's Suite", because they were traditionally kept in readiness for the Commander-in-Chief, East Indies, if he happened to drop by in *Ganges* or *Bacchante*. I am told that socially the British High Commissioner is still rated well above the American Ambassador, even though he does live in a house that might have been built for a Croydon cinema manager in 1934.

The British were never deeply assimilated into Mauritian life. Though the island's educated society was European, cultured and agreeable, most of the Governors and their ladies remained almost as insulated from it as they were from their subject Hindoos or Hottentots across the water. By the treaty of cession they were bound to respect its Frenchness, and this doubtless limited their field of intervention. The chief pleasure they shared with the Franco-Mauritians seems to have been that universal imperial enthusiasm, racing. To this end the former French parade ground, Champ de Mars, was converted into an exceptionally attractive racecourse, high above the sea at Port Louis; and it was there, and almost only there, that the British administrators and their Francophone subjects met on easy terms.

IT DOES NOT SEEM to have been, by and large, a very imaginative Government. Progress was sluggish in matters like education, health, housing, or political advance. On the other hand there were admirable material achievements. The usual excellent roads were built. Telegraphs and cables happened. New techniques of growing and refining sugar were introduced. Most of science's advances, from X-rays to radio, were introduced surprisingly early to this distant and insignificant dependency. Most visitors to the island in British days, indeed, remembered most vividly of all the Mauritian Railway—a beguiling little prodigy of Empire, it seems, which pottered all around the island puffing endearingly and frequently whistling, stopping at stations with names like Sans Souci or Circonstance, delicately pausing at the Governor's private waiting-room outside Le Reduit, and faithfully taking down to their offices each morning, behind the slatted windows of its khaki four-wheeled coaches, the sun-helmeted lawyers and pince-nez'd merchants of Port Louis.

If this petty Raj was hardly dramatic, it was largely harmless. My sage was of the opinion, of course, that the island would always have fared better in a French confederation with La Réunion and Madagascar; on the other hand some Franco-Mauritians, faced with more anxious circumstances now, frankly wish the British had never gone. In two World Wars Mauritians of all races generously went to battle for the British Empire, and there are thousands of islanders today who feel, if not a kinship, at least an empathy with Britain. At dinner one night I was talking about Scotland to my neighbour, a sprightly Frenchman with a strong head for spirits and a stomach impervious to prawns. Did I happen to know, he asked me, the Commando memorial which stands so hauntingly on the moors near Inverness? "Well the man on the right, and a damned good man he was too, I can tell you—the fellow on the right was my batman. . . ."

I heard no strong words about the British Empire. It came, it went. There is a mountain in Mauritius, Pieter Both, upon whose spire-like summit there resides a large boulder, precariously affixed. An Old Mauritian Belief, the guide books say, used to be that so long as that boulder stayed in place, the British would rule the island. As the apes were to Gibraltar, that rock was to Mauritius. Well, the last British Governor flew away in 1968 (he was the 32nd, unless you count the Comte de Conway, who brought, one would imagine, an ambiguous *hwyl* to the island in the 18th century); yet the stone is still on the mountain-top.

I could offer several symbolic excuses for this obtuse phenomenon, but I really suspect that the rock stays up there not out of defiance or romanticism, but because nobody has bothered to tell it.

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AN ELDERLY Indian gentleman, Sir Raman Osman, succeeded the last of those Britons as Governor-General of Mauritius, and lives all alone, for he is a bachelor, among the roses and jacarandas of Le Reduit. When I went around the house I saw his solitary table laid for dinner at one end of the big dining-room, with two candles and a napkin, and the policeman who escorted me said he often saw His Excellency in the small hours of the morning deep in a lonely book in an upstairs window.

I never met Sir Raman, but I liked the sound of him, and thought him a very proper incumbent of Le Reduit: for if the almost listless continuum of Mauritius is partly apathy, or good nature, it is partly Indianness. This really is, *pace* Professor Meiklejohn, an Indian island. Even in the Professor's day the population was two-thirds Indian. Today the proportion is probably three-quarters, and the new ruling class of Mauritius, displacing British and French alike, is unmistakably Indian.

But it is an Indianness all its own, an Indianness muted. One of the more curious experiences of Eastern travel is to be driven away from the Mauritius airport by an Indian taxi-driver speaking fluent French. It must have been a salutory experience, too, for visiting empire-builders long ago, because one of the subtler weapons of imperial supremacy was the English language. Subject peoples were obliged to use it if they wished to succeed, but they seldom mastered it absolutely, so that the British enjoyed a permanent psychological advantage. In Mauritius the tables were, and are, turned. There the Indian speaks a far more fluent French than you do, and seldom feels the need to experiment with English at all.

Perhaps this is why Mauritian Indians seem calmer, more confident than Indians elsewhere. They were always more Frenchified than Anglicised, and thus occupy a special place of their own in the roster of expatriates. Mauritius is not one of your joss-stick, haggling, duty-free Indian islands. Its shops are not garish or demanding, its rich Indians do not apparently feel the need, as they so often do elsewhere, to flaunt their wealth and power. Though they form so overwhelming a majority, and are in absolute political control of the island, the Mauritian Indians are generally unassertive; and this apparent restraint, which is perhaps the product of a Franco-Indian cultural cross, is oddly potent if rather bewildering.

It may be partly indolence. The average Mauritian—which means the average Indian Mauritian—strikes me as moody but easy-going. That Russian cruiser had come to Mauritius in the wake of a cyclone, hastening from its base at Aden less in the cause of humanity, I suspect, than of display, for American, French, Indian and British warships had also supplied their services. Near the southern end of the island one day I came across a team of Russian sailors indefatigably repairing telephone wires in the hot sun, shinning up poles, digging trenches, heaving boulders out of the way. Nearby a gang of Mauritian workmen, engaged in laying the segments of a big concrete drainage pipe, accepted the Russian presence without visible signs of emotion, and while the poor sailors sweated away before them, lay curled up in the shady interiors of their pipe, watching the hours go by.

There is style to this indifference. The Mauritians are without self-consciousness—they are a very natural people. The Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Dr Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, Kt., may be an autocrat to his enemies, but is easily accessible to visitors, and anybody may enter Government House, circumventing with an ingratiating smile the sentry with his fixed bayonet, to inspect the mirrored chambers and stink-wood furniture upstairs. But it is a kind of anti-style. Deprived of a distant past, denied a racial unity, modern Mauritius is short of criteria. It accepts what comes. Because the French Government offered the transmitters, Mauritius is shortly to have colour television, though hardly a Mauritian in a thousand can afford a colour set. Because English planners suggested it, Port Louis is building high, and many a delightful quarter of town is disappearing in dust and ring road.

I TOOK PART in a television programme one afternoon, and thought the experience well illustrated this throw-away temperament. It was produced by young Indians with a wayward but charming insouciance. The first time we tried something went wrong with the equipment, so with cheerful shrugs we dispersed for tea. The second time we had neglected to obtain the necessary permit from the Director-General. When at last we taped our discussion everybody else had gone home, and we talked in the empty studios as in a tomb (though the interviewer turned out to have won the *Observer* prize for

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his dialectic aptitudes at the University of Aberdeen, and was a canny wee fellow indeed).

It is fecklessness of a sort, but not of the tropical sort. Mauritius is in the tropics but not exactly of them, and if the Mauritian Indian is often lazy and even effete, it is not from ineptitude or despair. There is no sense of hopelessness here. That *dolce far niente* is deliberate, not malnutritive; and on the whole Mauritius goes well. There is little abject poverty. There are intelligent schemes to diversify the economy. Of course there are incessant disputes of race, religion, and political mayhem, and a current State of Emergency forbids all public meetings. But to the stranger these affairs are so deeply internecine that they hardly show. There is a blandness to this island.

I PUZZLED OFTEN over this characteristic, which did not seem to fit the geographical or political facts, and which expressed itself so surprisingly in the fatalist detachment of the people. I knew, as I say, that it was something to do with time, but the true key to it came to me only at the end of my visit, when I was visiting the Pamplemousses Botanical Gardens, in the northern part of the island. They are among the loveliest of all tropical gardens, founded by the French in 1770, and gratefully developed by the British—General Gordon lived in their delectable garden château when he commanded the Royal Engineers on the island. When I went there, though, the gardens had been devastated by the recent cyclone, their marvellous palms split or toppled, their giant water-lilies ruffled in the ponds, their paths choked with fallen fronds and gourds. Never mind, I said to the curator, I would do my best to imagine them as they were before—or as they would be again in 20 years time! "Ah", he replied, "but before this cyclone we were only just recovering from the last one: and in 20 years' time we shall have had another!"

They will have had several more in fact, for though the worst Mauritian cyclones occur with a terrifying punctuality every 15 years, lesser ones fall upon the island far more frequently. This means, I gradually came to realise, that there is no permanence to the place. Nothing is old, and nothing lasts. I had read before I came of the old Port Louis restaurant La Flore Mauricienne, one of the island's best-loved institutions. As soon as I reached the town I sought this establishment out, hoping to have an omelette or a lobster pilaf, perhaps, in some mellow haunt of the colonial bourgeoisie, all tucked napkins and devoted waiters.

I found it torn down, and renovated only as the ground floor of a banal office block, with a snack bar attached; but not a soul, not even the most loyal of the old-school French loyalists, expressed any sentimental dismay at its transformation. It was there, it had gone, like the Empire, like the grand palms of Pamplemousses. I have often thought about Mauritius since I came home, and vividly sense still this acceptance of the mutable. It seems to me very modern in a way, like a rejection of possessions, and it does weaken the impact of time in that curious place, and makes yesterday and tomorrow in Mauritius, age and youth, even life and death seem interchangeable: so that by a happy paradox much the most stable figure in Mauritian life seems to me in retrospect that corpulent old traditionalist *raphus cucullatus*, the Grey or Common Dodo, whose extinction brought him security after all, and who waddles impervious now through every change and cyclone.

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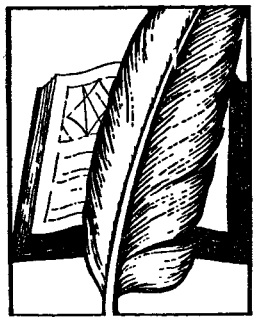

Column

THERE ARE few people alive who have had a more remarkable, chequered, yet in a very special sense successful career than Albert Speer, once Hitler's favourite architect and later minister for armaments of the Third Reich. There are good grounds for saying that, in the bizarre collection of criminals, scoundrels, knaves and fools which composed the ruling class of National Socialist Germany, he was the only man capable of rational and objective thought; but he was also exceptional in another way. He had in him the seeds of a moral sense, which in adversity developed and matured, so that after long years of self-analysis and self-criticism, he was at length able to come to terms with his past, and in his memoirs write what is up to now the best account of what life at the top was really like in the Germany of Adolf Hitler.

The memoirs were very largely the product of the long process of meditation, recollection and, one has to add, conversion which Speer underwent as a prisoner in Spandau, while serving the sentence of twenty years' imprisonment imposed on him by the International War Crimes Tribunal in Nuremberg. Fortunately, as part of the rigorous régime of physical and mental hygiene which Speer adopted in Spandau, he kept a diary in which he recorded every phase of his experiences in prison, and if one may judge by the long extracts from it which were published in the course of the summer in *Die Welt*, when the complete text appears it should prove as great an addition to our understanding of the Third Reich as the memoirs themselves.[1]

THE DIARY WAS COMPOSED under highly peculiar circumstances, which, however, provided a splendid observation post for anyone interested in human nature. Speer found himself locked up, at the closest of quarters, with all that was left, after suicide and execution had taken their toll, of the higher ranks of the Nazi political and military leadership. Of his six companions, Rudolf Hess had been Deputy *Reichsführer*; Constantin, Freiherr von Neurath, Foreign Minister; Walther Funk, Economics Minister; Grand-Admiral Raeder, Commander-in-Chief of the German Navy; Admiral Dönitz, commander of Germany's U-boat fleet and, for a brief but unforgettable moment, Hitler's successor as head of state; Baldur von Schirach, Reich Youth Leader and *Gauleiter* of Vienna.

They formed as curious and heterogeneous a crew as the Great Train Robbers. Neurath was an aristocrat, Hess a cloudy and vicious idealist, Funk a journalist, Raeder and Dönitz professional sailors, Schirach a poet and thug; all they had in common was complicity in the crimes of the Third Reich. Speer observed them all with a cold eye, astonished sometimes by the way in which, amid all the humiliations of Spandau, they still preserved the habits and illusions of men in supreme authority, sometimes by that exaggerated streak of vanity which was so characteristic of the Nazi leaders, sometimes by displays of a petty cunning which had once been devoted to ruling an empire, sometimes by outbursts of irrational rage which, in better times, would have meant death to thousands.

The ex-*Gauleiter* of Vienna, with whom Speer's relations were on the whole amicable, quarrels with him violently because Schirach thinks that Speer has stolen his garden broom. Raeder cannot forget that Dönitz was his military subordinate, treats him as such, and expects from him the deference due to a Grand Admiral ("After all, I rank with a Field Marshal!"). Dönitz, on the other hand, as Hitler's successor, thinks that Raeder owes him the loyalty and obedience which the head of the German state expects of all his subjects. This claim leads to a marvellously comic Mad-Hatter argument between Dönitz and Speer.

"I am, and shall remain, the legitimate head of the German state," says Dönitz. Speer is astonished and points out that Theodor Heuss was elected President of the German Federal Republic several years ago in Bonn. Under pressure from the occupying powers, says Dönitz. "Until all parties, including the National Socialists, have the right to vote, and elect no one else, my legitimacy remains." Speer says that in Dönitz's position he would renounce his rights, but Dönitz shakes his head in despair at his stupidity. "You simply will not understand! Even if I renounced my rights, I should remain head of state, because I could not abdicate without naming a successor."

"Even though Kaisers and Kings abdicate after a revolution?", says Speer. Dönitz instructs him in the mysteries of constitutional legitimacy: "They always named a successor. Otherwise their abdication had no validity."

[1] See Golo Mann's critique, "The Devil's Architect", ENCOUNTER (August 1970). Speer's *Spandauer Tagebuch* will be published this autumn by Ullstein Verlag, Berlin, and next year in translation by Collins (London) and Macmillan (New York), under the title *Inside the Walls of Spandau*.

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"Then you're lucky the Crown Prince is dead," says Speer, "otherwise there'd be too many of you." Then he remembers that Prince Louis Ferdinand is still alive, and asks maliciously, "How did you arrange these things with the head of the House of Hohenzollern in 1945?" Dönitz shrugs his shoulders: "He still clings to the Imperial idea."

But there were more serious grounds for dissension between Dönitz and Raeder. Dönitz thought the Grand Admiral responsible for losing the War, through his failure to build the 300 U-Boats which Dönitz had demanded; if these had been available at the outbreak of War, England would have been brought to her knees in 1941. . . .

Speer is indefatigable in trying to extract from his fellow prisoners any information which will help him in his task of reconstructing the past. Thinking of the terrible situation in the bunker of the Reichs-chancellery where he saw the *Führer* for the last time, he asks Funk how he passed the last days of the Third Reich. For answer, Funk feels under his mattress and holds up a brandy flask; "It was just one long booze-up. . . ." he says.

★

SPEER'S SCENES OF PRISON LIFE give a wonderfully vivid insight into the futility of the prisoners' existence in Spandau and also into the mental degeneration which is a normal accompaniment of long-term imprisonment. Speer himself makes no complaint about his treatment nor does he in any way challenge the justice of his sentence. Indeed, he seems almost grateful for the opportunity the long years of confinement give him to reflect upon his past and try to make sense of it all. In one sense, he is luckier than his companions, because this effort gives a continuous purpose to his existence; but in another he is worse off, because the motive behind it is his overpowering sense of guilt.

Even when he is most objective, this sense is always present, because every trivial incident or conversation has the power of recalling some scene out of his past when he was inextricably involved in that great machine of destruction which he did more than most to keep efficient and well-oiled. There was one of such scenes, however, in which he might have found a legitimate source of pride or satisfaction—that moment in the bunker in Berlin when he told Hitler to his face that he proposed to disobey the *Führer's* orders and do what he could to preserve what was left of the German economy, so that the German people might have some faint chance of survival, which, in Hitler's view, they no longer deserved. Such a moment was unique in the entire history of the Third Reich; yet curiously enough it produced no reaction in Hitler, who pardoned in Speer behaviour which in anyone else would have been followed, even at that late hour, by instant execution.

It is a sign of how totally the Third Reich accepted the *Führerprinzip*, that this one bright moment in his past troubles Speer's conscience: for was it not a gross betrayal of that supreme virtue of loyalty which was the only justification of his own behaviour and that of his fellow prisoners? *Loyal* is indeed the word heard most frequently on the lips of his companions, just as it was Göring's last word when Speer told him he proposed to disobey Hitler's orders. "It's all very well for you, Speer", said the Reichsmarshal, "but as for me, I shall remain *loyal* to the end." But Speer reflects that, used so often, loyalty has simply become a cant expression, employed, not to justify, but to excuse any piece of blackguardism, from the most trivial to the most outrageous; and that if loyalty is indeed a virtue it is only so in the form of loyalty to a moral code and not to a person or to an institution.

So Speer painfully meditates in his prison cell. The diary is largely a series of flashbacks to the past, each of which presents him with some particular problem to which he strives to find a satisfactory answer; satisfactory, that is to say, not in the sense that it excuses his conduct, but that it offers some reasonable explanation of it. And of course, of all these problems, the greatest, the one which as it were subsumes and personifies them all, is Adolf Hitler himself, a being so various and so contradictory that he really could be all things to all men, so that few of those who came into close contact with him were able to resist his attraction.

SPEER ENJOYED what was very much a special relationship with Hitler, and it is natural that Hitler's shadow should fall heavily across the pages of his diary. So much does he preoccupy its author, that almost anything is enough to conjure up his figure in Speer's mind. A brilliant, cloudless sky over Spandau suddenly recalls another such sky, over the Berghof, Hitler's mountain retreat in Obersalzburg, and Speer vividly evokes the scene—Hitler's little private court at ease on the terrace, drinking *Sekt* and vermouth-soda and fruit juices, the ladies outstretched acquiring a suntan, laughter and gossip echoing across the mountains. Then suddenly a hush falls as Hitler appears, in a well-cut civilian suit of a rather *outré* colour, and makes himself agreeable to his guests. Lunch is already, as always, an hour late, because the *Führer* has a genuinely Viennese contempt for punctuality, but

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on this occasion the guests are lucky because it is only another half hour before he is ready to sit down to table.

This time he does not embark on one of those endless monologues which he loved to inflict on his domestic circle, all tending to persuade them that they are in the presence of true greatness: the man of iron will who has sacrificed his artistic genius for the good of the German people, but one day, when his mission has been accomplished, will retire from the dust of politics to apply himself to those grandiose artistic and architectural projects he never ceased to discuss with Speer, which will transform the whole of Germany into a work of art of such magnificence that, by comparison, Greece and Rome, as well as the cities of the Renaissance and Paris, will dwindle into insignificance. On and on the voice continues, a relentless and interminable torrent, the longest LP ever played, and lunch, or cream cake and *Schlagobers*, gets further and further off; but the guests, even though their stomachs are beginning to rumble, feel that it is all well worth it—for surely they are present at one of those historic scenes at which future ages will look back in awe and wonder, as we look back on Plato at the Academy, Aristotle instructing Alexander, Caesar at the Rubicon, Napoleon at Arcoli?

HOW DID Hitler do it? Speer does not blame himself for being deceived, though his mother (so he himself suggests) should have taught him to know better; she sniffed something intolerably second-rate and *parvenu* in the air of the Berghof. But, as Speer says, many better, cleverer, greater men than himself succumbed to the power of Hitler's charisma. Where, then, did the power lie? The problem of Hitler's greatness haunts Speer, because even in Spandau, when it has all come to nothing, he still feels that there was greatness there. But in what does it consist? Hitler was certainly not the great artist he believed himself to be in everything except achievement, which a cruel fate had denied him. Nor was he a great statesman; great statesmen spend their time in avoiding, not provoking, *Götterdämmerung*. Even less was he a great war lord; he exaggerated the power of the will to such an extent that finally he was led into a realm which, from a soldier's point of view, was pure fantasy.

Speer concludes that the sphere in which Hitler's greatness really manifested itself was that of psychology; as a *Menschenkenner* he had no equal. He knew men's secret vices and desires, he knew what they thought to be their virtues, he knew their hidden ambitions and the motives which lay behind their loves and their hates, he knew where they could be flattered, where they were gullible, where they were strong and where they were weak; he knew all this, not as a psychiatrist does, by study, or empirical observation, or sympathy, for his knowledge engendered in him a supreme contempt for his fellow creatures; he knew it by instinct and feeling, an intuition which in such matters never led him astray.

It was this knowledge which explained his power over others, like Speer himself, and the incredible story of his rise to power, the sureness and assurance with which, *wie ein Nachtwandler*, like a sleepwalker, as he himself said, he took the most extraordinary risks and found his way through the most involved and complicated situations; he knew that human beings would not let him down. It was this knowledge also, an unerring sense of his enemy's inner weaknesses, which, as Speer notes, brought him his most notable military victories; Hitler's laurels were all won in the mind, not in the field.

This knowledge of his fellow men also explains his oratory. It was of the kind that speaks neither to the mind nor to the heart of his audience, but plays upon its nerves until they are strung to such a pitch of intensity that they shriek for release in action. It was the kind of oratory that, in my childhood, was capable of transforming an incurable alcoholic into a lifelong teetotaller in the twinkling of an eyelid. But it can only be practised by one who has a profound and subtle understanding of the secret hopes and fears of his audience, whatever they may be, and can bring them into the light of day; who can be a conservative with the conservative, a revolutionary with the revolutionary, a man of peace with the pacifist and a war lord with the belligerent, and on occasions all these things at once should it be necessary. Certainly Hitler was the greatest master of this type of oratory there has ever been, and I have stood among 10,000 people in the *Sportpalast* in Berlin and known that everyone around me was the victim of its spell. Who knows, if I had not been inoculated in childhood against the tricks of oratory, I might have succumbed myself.

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THEATRE

Three Dirges for England

By John Weightman

IT IS A CHASTENING experience to come back from holiday, full of English fresh air and burnt, for once, by the English sun, and then to see three theatrical performances in a row celebrating the decline of our national spirit. I have never been very good at being English. Firstly, because, however hard I try, my deepest reactions inevitably remain Northumbrian, working-class, and I.L.P., in the pre-war senses of those terms, which all denoted varieties of alienation from the central English cultural ethos; and secondly, because most of the superstructure I have been able to add is, through force of circumstance, French rather than English. I have always counted on other people to be strongly and confidently English on my behalf, even if I didn't always approve of what that meant. But if they lose their nerve and haul down the flag, where am I? Where are we all? I feel like the newly naturalised Jewish refugee at the time of Indian independence, who wept because the Attlee government was giving away his Empire. I want to say: "But things aren't as bad as all that! The choice isn't necessarily between blimps, snobs and zombies on the one hand and yobbos on the other. Come on, Messrs Wood, Hare and Gray, live up to your sturdy English monosyllables! Hearts of oak, what!" But to my anguished cry the *Zeitgeist* seems only to respond with the flatulent echo: "Fart!", since that plosive phenomenon is prominent in all three productions as the latest small variation on the obscenity theme.

MR CHARLES WOOD'S *Jingo* at the Aldwych Theatre is the most puzzling of the three works. The title is, of course, an example of antiphrasis, and one wonders why, at this stage, so much directorial and acting talent should be devoted to denouncing the apparently colossal ineptitude of the English in Singapore in 1941, in the guise of three silly-ass men and one "frightfully flighty" woman. The piece begins as a Cowardian, Maughamesque or even Wodehousian extravaganza in the colonial setting. Gwendolen has come to Singapore with George her current husband, a B.B.C. reporter and propagandist holding the courtesy title of major. She bumps into her ex-husband, Ian, a real major, whose career she has blighted through infidelity and divorce. She is also pursued by Percy, the G.O.C., who once had an affair with her. Ian would like to seduce Gwendolen in order to get his own back a little. Gwendolen wouldn't mind being seduced, since George is a bore and moreover castrated by the heat. Percy is sniffing around in the hope of having a go again, because his wife is incapacitated by "the trots", as he puts it in his crisp military parlance.

A certain amount of traditional, if untidy, fun is generated by these three clown-like characters as they bandy words with each other and with Gwendolen, superbly played by Anna Massey, who is quite unsinkable as an actress. But they are obviously meant to signify more than themselves. George broadcasts the most biased rubbish about the military inefficiency of "the little yellow men", who cannot see in the dark to pilot their planes.

If our Far Eastern propaganda was really like this, all I can say is that it bore no resemblance whatever to the news bulletins I was reading at the time to the French. Perhaps our information service was intelligent in Europe and obtuse in Asia; at any rate, I never encountered anyone quite as bone-headed as George in either Broadcasting House or Bush House. But I must add that George would not hurt a fly, in spite of his ludicrous broadcasts. All these men are presented as good-hearted, stupid fellows, vaguely concerned with hanging on to Gwendolen, at the same time as they blunder steadily into defeat and capture. Percy is even shown eventually in a rather tragic light as a man whose nerve has been broken by a terrible experience at Dunkirk, and who now, on the verge of impotence, achieves sexual satisfaction through having his bottom smacked, a procedure which combines a return to the pleasures of infantile masochism with a

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parody of willingly accepted punishment for the collapse of Empire.

Now I know that, all over the world, the English have the reputation of liking to be beaten and sodomised, at least by each other, but they had it already at the height of their imperial vigour, and we are now given to understand that some of our most aggressive adventurers, such as T. E. Lawrence, were reacting against their privately practised masochism. Perhaps the equation "*mens sana in copore sano*—imperial success" has always been an illusion. The source of imperial drive may be strong neurosis, and the whole public school system may have been a spontaneous collective form of neurotic conditioning.

On this question, Mr Wood seems to me to shed no light. If he is simply saying: "Here are three relatively decent idiots, caught up in the absurdity of events—umblimpish blimps, pathetic examples of public-school training and incapable, between them, of managing one lively woman", his play hasn't much general import. In the end, in spite of all, the Japanese were defeated. On the other hand, if he is implying that George, Ian and Percy ought to have been stern, efficient custodians of Empire, he is running counter to the liberalism inherent in much of the dialogue. I couldn't make him out, nor —judging by the grumblings around me—could the audience.

THE TITLE OF DAVID HARE'S *Teeth 'n Smiles*, a play with music at the Royal Court, is another instance of antiphrasis; the meaning is pandemonium and tears. The action, set in 1969, centres around a rock-group with a female lead singer, Maggie, hired to play at the May Ball in Cambridge; and there is an explicit contrast between the upper-class university atmosphere, which is said to be effete and unsatisfactory, and the lower-class, uncultured, foul-mouthed yet "genuine" musicians. In a middle position is the Cockney promoter of the group, Seraffian (of Armenian or Jewish origin?), a cheerful, amoral, sixtyish spiv, a sort of burnt-out case, who narrowly missed death in the Blitz and has taken a ruthless view of things ever since.

Mr Hare shows his sympathies fairly openly. Although an ex-Cambridge man himself, he is for the band and Seraffian against the university, which is denounced in a sneering speech by Arthur, an ex-lover of Maggie, who left Jesus College to become a song-writer, because love seemed truer than study. Also, the student master-of-ceremonies, the only actual member of the university we see, hates his medical studies and dreams of dropping out and going off with the band. In the event, he is seduced by Maggie, is given L.S.D. and ends up in hospital, while Maggie, to the delight of the band, burns down a marquee and generally plays havoc with the university, at the same time as Seraffian pilfers the College silver.

This is a counter-culture attitude, resting on the assumption that the rock-bands of England, derivative though they are from America, are more vital than the English universities. Admittedly, I have a vested interest in the universities; but I don't see how we can do without the university ideal, which is just as necessary for the cultural health of the nation as anything else, including music in all its forms. If some university classes are more boring than some rock-sessions, that is because the teachers and students concerned are not living up to the ideal, which remains intact, however inadequate any particular university may happen to be. What Mr Hare says or implies against the universities is little more than prejudice in favour of the life of feeling (in rock), as opposed to the life of the intellect (in rational study), and supposes that the two forms of living are radically different, which is debatable. It is true that a young man in love may find books unpalatable and analytical thought irrelevant until he has satisfied his instinct. But he will come back to books afterwards, if he wants to understand himself and the world. Feeling and intellect are not mutually exclusive, although they may be subject to oscillation or alternation.

However, while apparently unable to see the point of the university, Mr Hare does not sentimentalise the rock-group. They are a bunch of strolling players, who would rather devote themselves to this form of art than do anything else, and they have the cynical comradeship of any team. But their art, such as it is, does not provide a solution to the problem of living; in fact, it leaves them remarkably short of psychological fulfilment. One of them is a drug-addict, who will eventually kill himself. Maggie gets drunk every day and has to be sobered up for the performances. Arthur is tragically in love with Maggie and their relationship has gone wrong for reasons which remain obscure. Besides, they are an unimportant band, and Maggie's boozing has got to the point where Seraffian has decided to sack her and dissolve the group. So, they are a precarious, suicidal crew, who have escaped from English working-class and lower-middle-class dreariness into a twilight zone, where they are exposed both to their own vacuity and to flimsy commercial values.

The good parts of *Teeth 'n Smiles* show the tragi-comic dilemma of this sub-culture, which has both its funny and its moving moments. But the suggestion, which occurs more than once, and is driven home by the final song about the sinking

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of the *Titanic*, that this sub-culture is somehow symbolic of present-day England, leaves me quite incredulous.

SIMON GRAY'S *Otherwise Engaged* at the Queen's Theatre is the most accomplished and sophisticated of the three productions, but also the chilliest, since it is a parade of uniformly depressing British types around a central, frigid, verbal dandy, who has opted out of living. The action is set in the immediate present. Simon Hench, a handsome, youngish publisher (ex-public school and Oxford), is settling down in his charming house, in the absence of his wife, to listen to *Parsifal* on his Hi-Fi, after putting his telephone on the answering system, since he is going to be "otherwise engaged." However, he is interrupted for the duration of the play by a series of visitors, whose conversation gradually reveals a cross-section of contemporary society.

Only one member of the lower orders appears, an uncouth, cadging, sociology "student", whom Simon has allowed to have the top-floor flat at a reduced rent (which is never paid) as a means of conscience-salving, and who is an unlovely bundle of randiness and social resentment. The other characters are middle-class and all recessive or obnoxious: Simon's brother, Stephen, who had the misfortune to go to Reading University instead of Oxford, and who is a down-trodden, public-school master with a wife and too many children; Jeff, Simon's "best friend", a loud-mouthed drunken man of letters, who rails against Europeans and Australians and over-plays his virility; Davina, his current girl-friend, who offers herself, breasts first, to Simon to get her book published; Wood, a former school contemporary of Simon and Stephen, who has emerged suddenly from the past chiefly because he once had a homosexual passion for Simon; and finally, Beth, Simon's wife, who teaches English to foreigners and is having an affair with another teacher of English to foreigners, Ned, afflicted with a psychotic wife and an autistic child.

This summary may sound off-putting, but a continuous ripple of mirth is maintained by the skill with which Simon, suavely played by Alan Bates, holds his visitors verbally at bay, trips them up by taking their expressions literally, and sometimes insults them with exquisitely polite impartiality. He is gradually drawn in the round as an English non-hero of our times, whose major involvement with people as people occurred years ago at boarding-school, when he enjoyed his golden hour as a popular little buggeree. Since then, he has become a semi-male heterosexual, who takes his pleasures with cat-like discrimination, has avoided having children because he does not want to be bothered by them, and is very willing to turn a blind eye to his wife's infidelity, since to have to notice it would disturb the neutralised tenor of his days. He is a "success", compared to his brother who tries to believe in school-teaching, or Wood, a long string of masturbatory pathos, or Jeff, doing his he-man act out of context and years too late, or Ned, the dim adulterer, teaching English to foreigners, the final debasement, since all some of us have left to sell, as it were, is our language, which more powerful communities can now appropriate as a convenient instrument to put to damned un-English uses all over the world. Teaching English to foreigners! It is almost as pathetic as being one of those owners of stately homes who live by showing themselves to tourists *in situ*, as if they were the denizens of their own zoo. Let us turn away from all these symptoms of decline, bolt the door on life, and join Parsifal, the impossible hero in his impossible search for the non-existent Absolute! Hi-Fi in the ivory tower.

I laughed quite a lot during the performance, but on reflection I find my heart in my boots.

Old Poets

When Sydney Cockerell told Sassoon how he'd
Told Hardy to stop waxing his moustache,
He gave a characteristic barking laugh.

Perhaps I ought to shave mine off. Though likely
I own absurder, more old-fashioned traits
No one will even tell me of; just bark about.

Roy Fuller

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Peter Porter

Ode to Afternoon

A command to the middle-aged,
you shall write disguised love poems
so that the young may respect you
when the truth is known

They will ensex your abstracts,
wink knowingly at all
the stale erudition
which so enrages your critics

You must make capital out of despair:
real pain is never art,
turn instead to quotidian tasks,
Grub Street at the obsessional!

In your review of *The Romance of Linear B*,
notice that all the texts are official art,
the numbers of the king's combs and cattle—
their songs you must imagine for yourself

Of *The Eighteen Chorales*, there is much love of God—
you alone have cracked the cypher
and know what he meant when he told the soul
to bedeck itself for its bridegroom

In the middle of *The Children's Crusade*,
you may put two adolescents under a tree
poking bits of bark down each other's front,
music by Puccini, the sun declining

Having set the scene, you are in the Land
of Afternoon. Sex, if it comes, will be late,
up some stairs following a nervous lunch,
her eyes like a Florentine postcard

In the afternoon they came unto a land
In which it seemed always afternoon—
The fathers were at the Races
and the lawnmowers ran all over the hills

Afternoon men in the morning of the world,
we donate our three score and ten
to a beleaguered maturity—
province of afghan hounds and honeydew

Mother, the girls you warned me of
are waiting behind the rector's hedge,
I can hear their voices; they are content
with the usual menagerie

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Home of averages where human kind
cannot bear very much reality
but the sun is always over the yardarm
and we are for the dark

Der Untergang des Abendlandes
is still a best seller though it sounds
better with a stierhorn's blast
than a song at twilight

These quotations will keep nobody warm,
so put away the deck chairs
and the half-finished poem
and return to your research

Which was into the lineaments
of great fiction, and began
with the motherless boy
circuiting his grown-up garden:

Huge tears are in the pond,
every hurt has a face like a flower—
that will be music across the road
from the long-dead birthday party

O sprays of scent and my blue aunts,
I am coming with my excuses ready,
I was reading down in the boatshed,
how shall we get through the afternoon?

John Press

Northern Nigerian Chiefs

A dozen visiting Nigerian Chiefs,
Tall, stately men in elaborately-woven robes,
Were booked in a country hotel. All had spacious rooms
Overlooking green fields and running streams,
Trees bulging with birds, lilacs puffed out with bloom.
The Chiefs went sailing with the local yacht-club,
Strolled through the fields on warm summer nights
And were stood brandies in the village pub.
When they left, after the usual exchange
Of courtesies, they made a mild complaint.
They wished it had been possible to place them
Somewhere in the bustling centre of Birmingham,
Near the cinemas and Woolworths, where the cars
And buses would have roared cheerfully at them.
They had been most uneasy in the hush
Of the country at night, haunt of strange birds and insects.
They hoped that for the remainder of their programme
They would be housed in some less savage place
And not confined to the heart of the English Bush.

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NOTES & TOPICS

The Writer as Revolutionary

A Flight from Openness?—By FERDINAND MOUNT

BAUDELAIRE arrived to find the fighting over. He was disappointed but, according to a friend, he had never looked so gay; his eyes were sparkling. On 24 February 1848, the poet was sighted in the middle of a crowd that had just looted a gunsmith's. He was carrying a new gun. "I've just fired my first shot", he claimed, and kept shouting, "We must go and shoot General Aupick! . . ."

There is a perfection of fatuity here. The incident incapsulates almost every recurring feature in the long connection between revolution and literary men: the touristic impulse to visit the action and join in; the cheerful ignorance of the issues involved; the brevity and futility of the participation; the desire to experience the thrill of action without any of its tedious preparation or painful consequences; and, above all, the blithe confusion of the personal with the public. Baudelaire adds to this familiar brew an irony which would be delightful in a somewhat narcissistic way were it not deployed in a situation where people were being killed. Still, he had the wit to acknowledge that his prime target was his stepfather the General and not "bourgeois society" or some other dignified abstraction. He had also the grace to speak in later years of the ignoble passions aroused by the February Revolution—although to have twenty-twenty vision in hindsight is not so remarkable a gift.

It is one of the merits of Renee Winegarten's *Writers and Revolution*[1] that she does not attempt to impose a linear pattern of development upon her subjects. By tackling them separately one after the other in chronological order from William Blake through Baudelaire down to Camus and Orwell she makes it clear that the reactions of writers to violence and revolution are as much inflections of individual temperaments as reflections of a developing historical process. The same reaction is to be found in the England of Pitt the Younger as in Russia before the freeing of the serfs or in post-1945 France. Conversely, exact contemporaries who frequent the same café turn out quite differently. Types recur, regardless of historical context: the Byron-Lamartine-Malraux model, the Keats-Heine-Turgenev type, the Wordsworth-Camus-Orwell figure.

It is part of the literary historian's duties to collate and analyse these familiar archetypes of writers involved in politics: the man of action absorbed in his quest for heroic status . . . the man of sensibility painfully responsive to the sufferings of the poor yet unable fully to commit himself to the brutal upheaval which he fears may be the only way to end that suffering . . . the man of moral passion who commits himself to the noblest currents of his youth but is driven by his unsleeping conscience to splash his way out of the increasingly muddy stream and watch from the bank. These studies are valuable not just because they uncover part of our history—Orwell and Byron, say, are quite as revealing about the way we are or were as Gaitskell and Garibaldi—but also because they are fascinating psychological cases in their own right, revealing hitherto unsuspected connections and divergences. I was struck, for instance, by an unlikely similarity between the Wordsworth of *The Prelude* and the Camus of *Noces* and *L'Été*, those lyrical essays which mostly spring out of the Algeria where Camus was born and brought up. Intense attachment to the landscape of childhood and the ability to make that landscape speak seems somehow to give both writers the strength to surmount and even profit from the shock of political disillusionment.

YET AT THE SAME TIME such psycho-literary studies do not really give us that broad, synoptic view which may properly be called a history of ideas. Renee Winegarten's book bears the same relation to such an undertaking as a collection of biographies of British Prime Ministers bears to the study of the growth of Prime Ministerial government.

[1] *Writers and Revolution: the Fatal Lure of Action.* By RENEE WINEGARTEN. New Viewpoints (Franklin Watts), £6.25; $12.50.

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The essential question remains: why do all the characteristics of literary revolutionism recur so persistently (when allowance is made for differences of individual temperament) over nearly 200 years, and why are they so rarely and vestigially to be found in the preceding millennia? What is the historically specific common situation which has apparently so indelibly marked the modern clerisy?

I have chosen Baudelaire out of the Winegarten portrait gallery because we do not particularly think of him as a Man of 1848, regarding him on the contrary as very much his own man, not easily knocked off balance by the prevailing wind. Yet, *mutatus mutandis*, at the barricades he behaves like almost any of David Caute's "fellow travellers" or like any of a thousand students at the Odéon in 1968. Why? What happened during the eighteenth century somewhere between Pope and Sade which transformed, apparently beyond recall, the dominant literary attitudes towards violence and revolution?

EVEN AT THE TIME writers were conscious that something had happened to them. Renee Winegarten quotes Madame de Staël's view that the role of men of letters had changed in the 18th century, literature having ceased to be an art and become instead a means to an end, "a weapon in the service of the spirit of man." We are familiar with the distaste of Burke and Tocqueville for the new political pretensions of literary men. Yet quite how and why mere scribblers came to take on this new role is never spelled out; nor do we see clearly what this prominence meant for the life of the writer himself.

It must surely be more than a coincidence that the figure of the revolutionary writer takes shape over almost exactly the same period as that of the professional man of letters. After the transitional horrors of Grub Street, it becomes possible to make a living as a writer—not easy but possible. The writer becomes for the first time a comparatively independent figure, less and less at the service of patron or faction. He acknowledges the authorship of his works, takes pride in them, becomes a person of consequence, a sage even.

This independence is not accidental or unique. It corresponds to the independence conferred on a great number of persons by economic and social developments (a great number, that is, compared with previous ages, still only a minute fraction of the whole population). The writer may exchange a private patron for the no less exigent patronage of the public, but he feels the latter yoke less irksome, because he shares the experience of his public, in particular that remarkable experience of a recent and dramatic increase in both political and economic liberty.

Now the writer's independence, like that of his public, was not won without cost. The old points of dependence were also points of reference and stability which gave meaning and structure to life and society. They limited and directed the writer and shaped his task. The needs of Church and State had to be served. Even the existence of faction lent tension and vigour to the fabric of social institutions; there were pamphlets to be written against heretics and dissidents, principles to be defended, squibs and allegories to be composed.

Graham Greene once remarked that if he had to choose he would prefer to live in the Soviet Union rather than in the United States. This remark has been interpreted as meaning: "at least in Russia there are great themes of life and death and slavery to be written about, while in America life is so trivialised that there is nothing worth writing about. . . ." But the remark may equally well be taken to mean: "In America there is *too much* to write about, but in Russia you are forced to concentrate on certain subjects and to handle those subjects within limits imposed by the situation. You must deal in allegory and indirect political references which will be grasped and relished by your audience, an audience which like yourself has been shaped by a very specific history and theology. These limits on both form and content will certainly test your literary skills but they will also force what talent you may possess to express itself with the greatest intensity possible. There will be no frittering, no false turnings. Life may be grim, but you will not be alone. . . ."

In other words, the preference for life in Soviet Russia could represent not so much a courageous decision to share and testify to the greater suffering as a preference for being directed by your situation, in effect, a flight from openness.

CONSTRAINT IS ALSO protection and direction for the writer. He knows for whom and about what he must write if he is to be true to himself. His audience understands him and vice versa. Only certain subjects and treatments are possible and permissible by law—not of course the law administered by the KGB but the law of his own conscience, *das moralische Gesetz in mir*.

At first sight, the idea of the writer as the possessor of negative capability is a modest one; the artist is to be seen as no more than a filter or vessel, possessing himself no character or identity. Yet this role is modest only so long as the reality which is to be filtered or contained is already selected and channelled by society. As soon as the

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Culture & the Spirit of Détente

RECENTLY *the West German television network broadcast a play by the Czech dramatist Vaclav Havel, "The Butterfly on the Aerial" a satirical parable on intellectuals who jabber away while the house in which they are living falls to bits. Havel, who has been suppressed in his own country since 1968, is not allowed to publish any of his work; and he earns his living as a brewery hand. Earlier this year he wrote an Open Letter (published in the September* ENCOUNTER*) to the Party Leader, President Gustav Husak, in which he dwelt uncompromisingly on the implications of a state of affairs in which intellectual life is being systematically emasculated.*

Havel's play was also accepted for simultaneous broadcasting by the Austrian Rundfunk in accordance with settled agreements. The German version was furnished with a postscript by the Czech satirist Gabriel Laub, now resident in Hamburg. A lighthearted meditation on intellectuals, it described them as truly "dangerous"—to those who repress them. "The extent to which intellectuals have been persecuted in Czechoslovakia shows what a fright they threw into the Party bureaucrats in 1968, and how insecure today's rulers are. . . ." A few days before these remarks were to be broadcast the German television received a telex message from the Austrians stating that, although Havel's play would be shown, they would regretfully have to dispense with Laub's commentary—"for diplomatic reasons."

THE POET WOLF BIERMANN **lives in East Berlin. For the past ten years he has been subject to a total boycott in his own country, the D.D.R.: no publications, no public appearances for his recitals, no mention of his name, nothing. But they just can't get rid of him. He persists in remaining a Communist, and he still regards the D.D.R. as "the better of the two Germanies." If Biermann lived in the West German Federal Republic his beliefs might debar him from being a school-teacher or a dustman; and an ideological extremist of his type might have a hard time with some recording companies, publishing houses, and newspaper editors. It could be that only because he fell out with his own government in the East did he acquire a Western public and a popular response, not unmixed with some political misunderstandings.**

Biermann and Havel have at least this much in common: they both write for their own societies but depend for the public dissemination of their work on the West.

The break-up of the Klaus Wagenbach publishing house in West Berlin left Biermann in need of a new publisher. Efficient literary publishers are few and far between; still fewer can afford to throw away official East German goodwill, and usually have some other East German writer under contract who would (voluntarily or enforcedly) desert them if Biermann turned up in their list.

One such courageous firm, or so it appeared, was the Hanser Verlag of Munich. Hanser approached Wolf Biermann, and a deal was clinched. Then came word from Hanser's specialists on the technical side. Biermann's appearance in the literary list would imperil relations with the D.D.R. book market, on which very much depended (that is to say: a number of subscriptions to Hanser's scientific magazines might be cancelled). Sheepishly, the literary editors broke off further negotiations with Biermann.

AUSTRIA IS A SMALL *neutral country which needs tolerably good relations with its Czech neighbour; Hanser Verlag's literary side is economically weak and needs the turnover provided by the scientific division. Thus, both decisions were made in the new European spirit of "Realpolitik", or, if you will, Détente.*

But what if all this "Realpolitik" gains ground? We shall soon be unable to clear our throats for fear that our cough could be interpreted as a noisy snub by Communist governments and injure all our new "mutual" economic and political interests. What if the dissident intellectuals are left in the lurch. Would not Solzhenitsyn have after all been right when he told American trade unionists in Washington recently: "Almost unintelligible to the human mind is the West's fantastic greed for gain and profit, a greed which transcends all bounds, all reason, and all conscience. . . ."

Dieter E. Zimmer

FOR THOSE *who supposed that the Helsinki agreement meant what it said about promoting travel and meetings "for persons active in the field of culture" the latest decision of the Czech Government suggests that the news has not yet reached Prague. A visa has been refused, without explanation, to Mr Peter Elstob, Secretary-General of International PEN, who was asked by our executive meeting in Paris to go to Prague and call on our member-writers there.*

It is thoroughly well known that PEN is an active, world-wide and purely cultural organization and that our object is to encourage meetings between writers, regardless of their politics.

V. S. Pritchett

President,
International PEN

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social "funnel" is removed, the poet takes on the whole world. He is large, he contains multitudes. He is open to the universe. His task becomes heroic. It is not surprising that he should sometimes be terrified of this immensity and be tempted to grab the nearest available funnel for experience.

It may seem that this interpretation does not explain the apparent paradox by which the writer longs for intellectual hierarchy, framework, discipline, limitation and direction, while at the same time his work is a continuing polemic against all forms of social constraint. He applauds tyrannies but continues to call for an end to censorship and the divorce laws. What sort of tyranny he applauds is secondary. Anything is better than the open society. In retrospect the fascists may seem to have netted a smaller haul of intellectuals, but that may be partly because they lost; Renee Winegarten has a nice chapter on the friendship between André Malraux and Drieu la Rochelle. Yet in fact are not the longing and the polemic really only different aspects of the same thing?

In a comparatively open society, the intellectual agoraphobe finds contact only in conflict. In his absurd wrangles with the few remaining advocates of censorship and other legal controls on mores he finds something to bite on and brace himself against. Mrs Mary Whitehouse and the League of Catholic Decency give their opponents a sense of being alive. To grapple with the shrinking forces of repression is like finding warmth in a rugger scrum on a cold afternoon.

RENEE WINEGARTEN subtitles her book "the fatal lure of action." Yet only to the Byron-Malraux platoon of the international brigade does The Cause represent primarily a means of appeasing the thirst for action. In the Keats-Heine section for example, the taste for inaction, doubts, and ambiguity is carried over from civilian life. Each soldier in fact brings to The Cause that temperament which he was born and bred with. What he finds in The Cause is not so much a faith as a home.

Revolutionism is a home in the sense that home limits the possibilities of life. It closes the door against many ways of seeing and behaving while opening the heart to others. Home sharpens the contrast between the warmth of the hearth and the hostile elements outside. Above all, it defines life as having an inside and an outside.

IN AN EARLIER PIECE in ENCOUNTER, I discussed homelessness in the context of nationality.[2] The

[2] Ferdinand Mount, "The Sense of Dispossession", December 1972.

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sense of national dispossession is a more concrete feeling, rooted in a historical fact or supposed fact of language or geography. Yet the sense of dispossession shares with the concept of alienation (so frequently and potently allied with it among the clerisy), the necessity of being self-determined. Only I can say whether I am at home in the nation, or social structure, or religious orthodoxy, or working environment in which I find myself. If the beliefs upon which these social realities are grounded are for me dead or false or hollow, nobody can persuade me otherwise. Professor Elie Kedourie takes Kant's notion of self-determination as the intellectual starting-point of nationalism; it fits equally well as the starting-point of literary revolutionism. But that is surely too great a burden to saddle poor Kant with. We must look back further. To the capitalist revolution? To Locke? To the day the first courtier broke out and put *"Profession: Writer"* in his passport?

Auden writes in *Letter to Lord Byron* of the two arts in the Augustan age: the secular art of Pope relying on his lordship's patronage and the religious art of Isaac Watts appealing mainly to the poor and lowly. He concludes:

The important point to notice, though, is this:
Each poet knew for whom he had to write,
Because their life was still the same as his.
As long as art remains a parasite,
On any class of persons it's alright;
The only thing it must be is attendant,
The only thing it mustn't, independent.

Does the writer end up at the barricades because he has no place else to go? He has shaken off the dust of his parents' house, he has spurned the crumbs from his lordship's table, he has stalked out of his pew in church or chapel. At the barricades, he is not only seeking authenticity of experience, he is looking for a home.

The Vilification of Confucius

Themes in Chinese History & Ideology—By MICHAEL LOEWE

THE VIRULENT CAMPAIGN to criticise Confucius was launched on a nation-wide basis in August 1973, and the message has subsequently been displayed in the slogans and posters which appear regularly in public places and buildings in China. Since October of that year the theme has steadily acquired a more prominent place in China's historical and archaeological publications sometimes occupying a half of the monthly or bi-monthly issue of the journals. The introductory talks with which the curators of museums and sites welcome visitors are invariably built around this subject; and the slogans feature conspicuously in some of the country's most modern edifices, built to meet the economic needs of the 20th century. As workers report for their shift or foreign visitors arrive to be shown round a factory or an electrical engineering works, their eyes encounter vignettes of China's historical personages. Portraits of select emperors, generals, or statesmen of a bygone age are displayed above short historical disquisitions, which expound the contributions which they made to the political development of the people of China. The subjects of the portraits are carefully chosen, so that it may be shown that their contributions were based not on the ethical, social and political system that is associated with Confucius, but with the principles that were advocated by his obsecrated rivals, the protagonists of "legalism."

In historical terms, certain elements of this latest reaction of China's masters are justified. In the past Chinese statesmen have regularly attempted to pass off their policies and actions under the guise of the "Confucian Ethic", however much they have in fact depended on the exercise of authority and compulsion that has been regarded as the hall-mark of "legalist" ideas. One of the main results of 20th-century research in Chinese history has been to expose the falsity of such a claim, and it is only gratifying to find a basic measure of agreement in this respect.

In terms of political ideals, intellectual developments, and the uses of history, however, the campaign has wide implications of a very different nature. Traditionally, responsibility for the compilation of China's principal histories has been vested in the state. But whereas, hitherto, its purpose has been to forge a link with the past and thus to demonstrate the legitimacy of a contemporary régime, the exploitation of history and

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archaeology today is directed to precisely the opposite aim—emphasising the break that has been made with the past.

THE ABSURDITIES AND CRUDITIES of the campaign stand revealed in several ways. One of the exhibits which was proudly on display in the Chinese exhibition at Paris and London had been withdrawn by the time that it reached Stockholm (May 1974). This rare object was a fragment of a manuscript copy of the *Analects of Confucius* which had been written in A.D. 710; and it bears a high value as one of the earliest witnesses of a text which had been compiled over a thousand years previously. Further examples of the way in which the campaign may affect the world of learning may be seen in the following titles that are printed, along with the Chinese versions, in recent numbers of the archaeological journals. The texts are given as they stand in the original:

Workers, Peasants and Soldiers of Various Nationalities in Sinkiang Criticising Lin Piao's Worship Confucius and Soviet Revisionists' Vain Attempt to Spoil the Unification of Our Country
(*Wen-wu*, no. 10, 1974)

The Iron-Smelting Techniques of the Han Dynasty and Pre-Ch'in Periods and the Struggle between the Confucianists and Legalists
(*Kaogu*, no. 6, 1974)

The intimate association of the criticism of Confucius with that of Lin Piao, who had held the position of vice-chairman of the Communist Party, developed after the campaign had started. It would be comparable (if an analogy could ever be wholly valid) with a campaign launched in the West to vilify Socrates, or even Jesus Christ, in direct association with, say, J. Ramsay MacDonald. This modern aspect of the campaign must be left to the professional "China watchers" to interpret; and those specialists may also perhaps provide an answer to the question why nearly a quarter-of-a-century elapsed after the foundation of the People's Republic, before the Chinese government took the offensive to reject the ideals of the Confucianists in favour of the principles attributed to their opponents. I am more concerned here with some of the historical and intellectual implications of the campaign.

PROBABLY ALL HISTORIANS of China—be they from China, Europe or America, be they Marxist, humanist or Christian by persuasion—would agree that a radical change took place in 221 B.C., with the formation of China's first Empire. By that year the King of Ch'in had successfully extended a single unified rule throughout the greater part of the sub-continent, with sufficient strength to scotch the claims of any other pretenders to rule, Since then the idea of a single empire, based on a unified set of institutions and universal provisions of government, has been accepted as the norm to which all ambitious soldiers of fortune have aspired in times of strife; and it is the natural form of government which scholars, civil servants, and peasants have alike expected to witness and to serve.

The change of 221 B.C. was radical in so far as it imposed a new characteristic on all subsequent political thought and institutions. Its significance has not been minimised by certain important historical facts that have sometimes been forgotten, obscured or suppressed by China's own historians; *i.e.*, that it is for perhaps only half of the following 22 centuries that unified empire has been effectively achieved; that at times such unity has been disrupted by the *force majeure* of non-Chinese peoples; and that at times it has been only thanks to foreign pressure or interference that unity has been restored.

The Empire of Ch'in was established in 221 B.C. as a result of severe fighting and the conquest of rival leaders in battle. If the later historians of China are to be believed (there are no contemporary records dating from the Ch'in period itself) the government was maintained with scant attention to moral principles. Two specific actions for which the government of Ch'in has been pilloried ever since are the destruction of certain literary works (by book-burning) and the cruel martyrdom of scholars (by entombment alive). While it will probably never be known for certain

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what actually occurred, these two events have throughout Chinese history been taken as characteristic of the régime of Ch'in. In philosophical terms, Ch'in's principles have been defined as those of the Legalist as opposed to the Confucian school, and as depending on the rigid exercise of the authority of state exclusive of moral principles.

The Imperial dynasties which followed Ch'in, no less than Ch'in itself, have depended on the exercise of autocratic rule and on a strict demand for obedience. Certainly many Imperial statesmen would have denied this charge; and it is indeed possible, or even likely, that the administrative measures of some of the subsequent Imperial governments did not involve the same degree of harshness or cruelty that has been ascribed, rightly or wrongly, to Ch'in. But whether they have been short-lived like Ch'in itself (221–207 B.C.) or Sui (589–617), or more securely established like Han (202 B.C.–A.D. 8 and A.D. 25–220), T'ang (619–906), Ming (1368–1643) or Ch'ing (1644–1910), China's Imperial régimes have nearly always arisen as a result of rebellion launched against the current régime, victory achieved on the field of battle, and the ruthless elimination of their opponents. The survival of the fittest has led to scant mercy. Imperial government has been imposed by the controls and punishments of state.

Faced with the need to justify their initial rebellion and claim to rule and to attract the loyal support of scholars, civil servants, and peasants, each new régime quickly called upon the writers of history to show that the new dynasty redeemed a suffering Chinese populace from the most cruel and dastardly oppression of its predecessors. For this reason the Standard Histories, which cover China's history from Ch'in (and earlier) up to 1910, invariably describe with some relish the enormities perpetrated by the last emperor and the statesmen of the displaced dynasty.

AT THE SAME TIME the historians and propagandists who have written on behalf of their Emperors have taken care to substantiate their claim to rule by positive and constructive arguments. While denigrating their immediate predecessors they have claimed that the institutions and forms of the régime which they serve were designed and operated in perfect conformity with earlier models, *i.e.*, those that had preceded Ch'in's unification of 221 B.C. These models were taken from the institutions ascribed to the Kingdom of Chou and the teachings of Confucius. While the line of the Kings of Chou may be traced, traditionally, from 1122 to 256 B.C., it is of considerable importance to note that its régime never existed as a unified empire, exercising power throughout the sub-continent. Chou's strength rested on the moral purpose ascribed to its institutions—on the claim that its kings had been deputed by Heaven to reign over mankind; on the praise lavished upon its institutions by Confucius; and on the singular respect that it has received in the early Chinese writings that are associated with Confucius' name.

Chou, then, has always stood possessed of moral qualities and ethical leadership; and since about 100 B.C. nearly all Chinese dynasties have been anxious to demonstrate that they are the effective successors to the Chou tradition and its Heaven-blest authority. It has, accordingly, been claimed that the institutions of an Imperial dynasty have derived not from Ch'in's "Legalist" practices, but from the moral precepts of Chou. The philosopher who *par excellence* was responsible for formulating these ideas was Confucius.

Ch'in, the first of the Imperial dynasties, has thus stood apart from all its successors. Possessing no official historian or propagandist of its own to answer for its deeds, it has remained throughout Chinese Imperial history as the whipping-post to which all dynasties fastened their objurgations. Ch'in has been traditionally cursed as the single dynasty which denied the moral leadership of Chou and Confucius and which rested on the contrary and wholly unacceptable principles of Legalism. However, it must be stressed once again that, whatever claims have been made, the practice has been to govern by autocratic methods. It is also of some interest to note that at certain times of political weakness or social disruption statesmen or philosophers have occasionally turned to Legalism and its principles as a cure for China's contemporary malaise; I will return to this aspect of the matter in a moment.

Finally, it is significant that, since Ch'in, China's successful Imperial dynasties have borne two characteristics which have made for permanence; and whereas there are a number of other characteristics of Imperial government which may be seen in operation in China today, these two are conspicuously absent. They are (*1*) a recognition that the temporal order of government forms but one element in a single majestic scheme of the cosmos; and (*2*) a predetermined system which provides for the smooth transfer of supreme authority on the death of the head of the state. The name of Confucius and the moral power of his writings have continuously been invoked in order to maintain and strengthen these two principles. Indeed at a very early stage of Imperial history a new doctrine was grafted on to the ethical teachings of Confucius. This was intended to lend support and hallowed authority to the

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view that the place and continuity of Empire lay within the two estates, spiritual and temporal, of the cosmos.

HITHERTO, THEN, Imperial governments have had their historians vilify the so-called Legalist principles of Ch'in and the very name of Ch'in itself; and they have praised Confucius and the principles of Confucianism as being the natural mainstay of the body politic. In doing so, governments have not been concerned by the contrast between the principles preached in this way and the actual measures of state that they have been accustomed to take.

Today the Chinese government finds itself beset by the same problem, *i.e.* that of seeking intellectual support for autocratic measures, from quarters which cannot be criticised for being unethical. But the government also faces another quandary. The usual sources on which their predecessors have been able to call for this purpose are no longer acceptable; for such sources are unavoidably based on principles with which Mao's People's Government cannot compromise. These include (*1*) the acknowledgement that the right to rule is in the first instance conferred by a superior power; (*2*) the acceptance of social hierarchies and material inequalities; and (*3*) the readiness to obey the commands of educated and respected officials, without any participation in government.

As in the earlier dynasties, so now the People's Government has sought intellectual support by demonstrating the iniquities of its immediate predecessor. It has been able to claim successfully, and with some justice, that it has redeemed the population of China from considerable suffering, injustice and corruption. However the difficulty of finding intellectual authority for government is immeasurably aggravated by the absence of a secure link with a cosmic system and a pre-determined system of succession for the head of state. These difficulties intensify with each month as the time draws inexorably closer when a successor must be found for Chairman Mao.

This void may be partly filled by turning to the Marxist scheme of human history, which has therefore featured constantly and repeatedly in China's historical writing since 1949. Much of this was, at first, devoted to establishing the precise ways and occasions whereby the destiny of China has moved through the successive stages of primitive, slave, feudal, capitalist, and socialist societies. Some of the time-charts, albums and catalogues that accompanied the Chinese Exhibition thus set out the various stages of this historical development in chronological terms. Not all the experts of the receiving countries were able to accept this chronology and its implications.

More recently, the emphasis has changed very significantly. Writers in the historical and archaeological publications are fostering and reiterating an analogy between the changes that overcame China in 221 B.C. and A.D. 1949. For both these years marked a radical change in China's destiny and historical development—in the one case, from a slave-owning to a feudal society; and, in the other, from a capitalist to a communist state. The magnitude of these changes is such that they surpass all other single datable events, and the analogy is primarily between events that are indubitably of outstanding and permanent significance. A further analogy is also being fostered. While the events or developments named are of unparalleled importance, so too are the key figures who superintended China's destiny on these two occasions. Thus the achievement of the first Ch'in Emperor, who (we are told elsewhere) burnt books and buried scholars alive, is of equal importance to that of Chairman Mao. Both men unified China at turning points of her destiny. Both men were at the helm at the crucial moment that marked the radical break with the past.[1]

HISTORY IS USED, as formerly, in China to serve political ends. With the great strides taken in China's archaeology during the last twenty-five years (with all credit to the People's Government for sponsoring such work), so too are the archaeological journals now filled with articles that are designed to "use the past to serve the present." This slogan was probably first formulated in March 1958, and it received renewed publicity in the learned journals when publication of these was resumed after the Cultural Revolution. The impetus of the recent campaign to denigrate Confucius has been conducted under these same auspices. If the achievement of Ch'in and the person of the first Emperor are to be held up as models for the present, Confucius and his disciples must be utterly discredited, as a warning against a predilection for the past. Similarly, all praise is due to those statesmen whose

[1] Certain difficulties are involved here, in determining the limits of China's "Feudal Age." Several publications which accompanied the Exhibition assumed that this started in 475 B.C., a date which appears to have been chosen on completely arbitrary criteria. Elsewhere, and not altogether inconsistently, we are told that the first Ch'in Emperor's achievement (221 B.C.) lay in founding the first feudalist monarchy in China (see *Kaogu*, no. 2, 1974, p. 74); or (p. 89) that the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, which are usually dated 722–481 B.C. and 480 (or 403) to 221 B.C., were a time of critical evolution from a Slave to a Feudal system.

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views can be shown to coincide with the principles of Ch'in and its government. Abuse is the reward of those officials of state who, from the Han period onwards, were trained in the arts of government on Confucian principles, and whose concepts of justice and administration conformed with Confucian precedent.

Confucius and his followers, whose lesson is that of continuity with the past rather than radical change, are therefore held up as "reactionaries", as upholders of an outworn system, as men who endeavour to restore a dying order that had been discountenanced by the natural march of Marxian history. Confucius and his followers represented those oppressors who had lived during the Slave era and did their best to prevent the crucial change to a Feudal order, for which the first Ch'in Emperor bears the credit (see *Kaogu*, no. 2, 1974, pp. 89–90).

FOR REASONS which I have explained above, Ch'in is the only dynasty which can be praised safely. For good measure it has been opportune to link this new trend in historical and archaeological writing with a further object of hatred who has been branded as a traitor: the luckless Lin Piao, whose name features quite regularly in the recent issues of the archaeological journals *Kaogu* and *Wen-wu*.

It is no new thing for these journals to include propaganda. The early issues of the 1950s devoted a large amount of text to this end, but the new element today consists in the specific use that is made of archaeological finds as a means of vituperation against Confucius and Lin Piao. Nor is the second half of the 20th century the only occasion when Chinese statesmen and philosophers have espied virtues in Legalist methods of government. Similar views were expressed at earlier times of grave dynastic weakness, social instability, or administrative failure; for example, in 81 B.C., at a time when the capital city and palace were recovering from a recent blood-bath; in the second century A.D., when government according to Confucian principles had manifestly failed to stem the growth of corruption and indiscipline in high places; and *c.* 800 when the dispirited and ineffective T'ang government was still suffering from the aftermath of the rebellion of An Lu-shan (755–63). However, at such times, most Chinese writers did not question the basic ethical principles or political purpose on which the Confucian system rested. It is significant that these protests have never been voiced at a time when the writ of Imperial government has run effectively throughout the land.

The analogy drawn by Chinese writers between the present stage of Chinese history and that of the Ch'in Empire is valid in one respect. Both periods have witnessed radical changes in China's political, economic and social circumstances. A further analogy springs to mind in this connection, *i.e.* with the Sui dynasty (589–617), which likewise followed a long period of disunity and demoralisation. Just as Ch'in founded a new type of government, so Sui, by inaugurating the newly conceived system of communications known later as the Grand Canal, started a new phase in Chinese economic practice; and the Sui's system of examinations for recruitment to the civil service has had far-reaching results on China's social structure ever since. The importance of these changes was just as great as those that have been introduced in China during the last twenty-five years.

In all three cases the régimes have succeeded in fostering a new pride in government and a new power of administration. But there is one further similarity between the Ch'in and the Sui dynasties that the writers in the historical and archaeological journals today may not see fit to emphasise. Neither dynasty survived the rule of their second Emperor. They came to an end after a mere fifteen and twenty-five years respectively.

Finally, attention should be paid to a point of doctrine that may prove to be highly embarrassing. As part of the stock reason adduced to explain how one Imperial dynasty has successfully and legitimately wrested power from its predecessor, the traditional historians and philosophers formulated the theory of the Right of the People to Rebel against an unjust and oppressive government. On the face of it this doctrine would appear to accord very well with the expressed claims of the People's Government regarding its own insurrectionary origin. But complications may ensue in two ways. Could not the doctrine be cited in support of a rebellion launched against the present government? The régime's current theoreticians could find it singularly difficult to counter this. If they do they may be running into another acute ideological danger. Some propagandist might well recall the unfortunate fact that the theory of the Right of Rebellion has been traced to Mencius. And was not Mencius second only to Confucius as (according to *Kaogu*, no. 2, 1974, pp. 89–90, and 80) a "reactionary upholder of a corrupt system, intent on blocking the processes of history"?

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The It & the We

Saul Bellow's New Novel—By MALCOLM BRADBURY

"Perhaps the cold eye was better. On life, on death. But, again, the cold of the eye would be proportional to the degree of heat within. But once humankind had grasped its own idea, that it was human and human through such passions, it began to exploit, to play, to disturb for the sake of exciting disturbance, to make an uproar, a crude circus of feelings."
SAUL BELLOW, "The Old System" (1967)

"Maybe America didn't need art and inner miracles. It had so many outer ones. The USA was a big operation, very big. The more it, *the less* we. *So Humboldt behaved like an eccentric and a comic subject. But occasionally there was a break in the eccentricity when he stopped and thought. He tried to think himself clear away from this American world (I did that, too)."*
SAUL BELLOW, *Humboldt's Gift* (1975)

DESPITE THE MASSIVENESS of the competition, and the doubts that are occasionally expressed about the range and the risks of his work, the author of *Humboldt's Gift*[1] remains surely the outstanding writer of his generation—the generation which began its fictional activities in or just after the Second World War had left America a super-power, and then continued them into a world in which that situation bred increasing tension, anxiety and historical strain. Something new had grown in America during the War: an intensified awareness that the fate of the nation was that of an urban, industrial, anxiety-ridden society run by mass and system. The temper of postwar American fiction markedly differs from what went before—it presents a world in which historical acceleration is massive, the city and the crowd compel and control, the self is perpetually at risk, and any gestures toward moral responsibility or community are tackled against the odds.

As for the writers, who themselves were more marginally angled into American society, the strain they wrote about told on them, and grew to be an increasing hazard during their careers. Salinger, a writer whose central characters hovered between sainthood and psychic disaster, followed his Glass family into agonised silence. Malamud's and Roth's more recent novels have shown the agony of applying moral and human containments to the grotesque landscapes of modern consciousness in modern history. Mailer, of whose robustness as a writer there has never been any doubt, acquired himself a consciousness big enough to take the strain, by opening up as an agent of the *Zeitgeist*, an historical performer, a pure moral provisional. And Bellow, who has attempted to write novels in which the grotesque contemporary world is given its due and indeed its richness, but in which the assertion of a possible human mean, a good measure for man, is maintained through the actions of an intelligent, critical, expectant hero, has also shown the stress.

Bellow's critics have accused him on the one hand of repetition, of a persistent telling of the same basic story of the hero accomplishing, by action and thought, some breaking of his bondage in a limiting world and a facile historicism; on the other, of growing sour in his liberalism, of withdrawing from social hope. Certainly there can be little doubt that the high ironies of the more recent stories and of *Mr Sammler's Planet*, his seventh novel, betoken a sceptical withdrawal from the run of contemporary consciousness; and a cold eye, looking with long historical and moral distances at the contemporary circus of consciousness, prevails. Bellow's novels now cover and record with an acute historical register thirty years of stressful American history, a history so pressing that in *Sammler* it seems to get close to overwhelming its creator. But with *Humboldt's Gift* Bellow has bounced back, back to the panoramic, picaresque, ebullient vein of some of his earlier novels, and back, too, to his resilient registering of the contemporary consciousness. The critics who saw him as repeating himself will have to grant him, at least, a capacity for responding to the change and contingency of the world; the critics who was him withdrawing into quiet desperation will have to grant him the capacity to open out his spirit again.

[1] *Humboldt's Gift*. By SAUL BELLOW. London, Secker & Warburg, £4.90; New York, Viking Press, $10.00.

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THIS RESILIENT PATTERN is in fact apparent in his earlier fiction, which has shifted, very freely, through a variety of forms, while retaining certain essential and valued commitments. Bellow is not, in the post-modern sense of the term, an experimental novelist; he does not question reflexively his own fictionality, or dispense with traditional commitments to a structure devised from character and plot; and indeed there is a basic dependence on the fable of a growing consciousness that functions in an agonised but real historical world. However the texture of that world is post-romantic, and the bulk of the prevailing gestures absurd, so that the characteristic Bellovian tone is something between an existential metaphysics and a mental farce. But this has generated much shift of manner and weight.

Bellow's first two novels, *Dangling Man* and *The Victim*, were very tight, closed books. *Dangling Man*, published in 1944, and catching not only the contemporary wartime atmosphere but the mood of crisis about selfhood that was to follow in the conformities of the 1950s, is a very European book, inconceivable without Kafka and Camus. The hero is a diary-confessor, a clerkly, intelligent man about to be inducted into the army. He finds himself deprived of work, action, politics, experiences a period of exposure and nullity, regresses into solitude, examines his inner freedom and finds it void, and then makes a strange and ambiguous peace with himself and society by entering the army voluntarily, self-consciously cancelling his freedom. Out of this ambiguous decision comes much of the spirit of Bellow's later work.

Dangling Man is an American absurdist novel, pure, melancholy, and tight-managed in form. It envisions modern existential exposure, with the world of nature worn and unreflective, the world of the city harsh, impersonal and lowering, the life of inner selfhood at low ebb, the measure of man potentially debased in an historical pressure that yields little. But the hero still seeks an outward covenant, feels the pressure of moral onus, the need to keep "a measure of cleanliness and freedom" despite "the calamity, the lies and moral buggery, the odium, the detritus of wrong and sorrow dropped on every heart." In cancelling his freedom he both limits and extends his civility, and the book ends suspended at the point of loss and gain. From that point on the later novels step further.

The Victim, too, is set in the post-romantic city, a New York sweltering in summer heat, where bodies push against bodies, lives against lives, and any sense of a meaning for life other than that of a rigorous, naturalistic determinism and competitiveness seems impossible to yield. Yet out of this world Bellow seeks to distil an effective metaphysics of responsibility and humanity, a taste for a higher human measure. He does this rhetorically through a vigorously supple style in which the life of mind moves almost comically between the world of substance and the world of thought, the It and the We, and structurally through the story of the hero's discovery of the oblique links that bind his fate to that of another man whom, in the impersonal system, he has accidentally dislodged.

A BLEAK INHERITANCE from naturalism and existentialism is rooted in Bellow's work. On the other hand, he has always maintained the conviction that, though history and environment may determine man, the reverse possibility is always present. The universe is in some sense open to our making, and by ebullience and energy we may convert it into a landscape for the spirit. In *The Adventures of Augie March* and *Henderson the Rain King* Bellow invented a new form and a new kind of hero. The form was picaresque comedy, and the heroes were self-creators, men who command large dimensions of their own fate, and move through expansive, open landscapes and comic self-venturing into the growth of spirit. The structural form expands, socially in *Augie*, and to a deeper mythic potential in *Henderson*; the rhetoric of self-presentation takes on greater splendour, wit, and comic self-awareness.

Then, with *Herzog* and *Mr Sammler*, Bellow seems to seek a reconciliation of his two manners, of bleak naturalism and comic euphoria. Both are novels primarily of mental action in a tight, limiting, historically pressured world. Herzog is dislodged into a kind of madness, while he resists the social madness of his "reality instructors", who would render the entire universe into a florid apocalypse. Mr Sammler is even further displaced; one-eyed and detached, a cultural stranger in moonshot New York City, he is sustained by his own inner debate and a sense of kinship through common mortality. Both novels reject the indulgent, spurious alienations that have come from the legacy of 19th-century romanticism and historicism, in a world abounding in simplified, popular versions of selfhood. Bellow rejects the false prophecies of modern alienation, though his heroes are alienated figures. They live amid the intellectual, social and political bewilderments of the modern urban world, of which Bellow is a precise observer, looking not for a "five cent synthesis" but a tested, articulate and intelligent truth, which is a truth of feeling, relationship, and mind.

Critics have complained that Bellow's optimism in these matters is sometimes unearned, and the

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endings false. David Galloway neatly objects that the Bellovian hero both lights out for the territory *and* goes home again, and so "gets to have his existential cake and eat it too."[2] There is validity in this; what is clear, though, is that Bellow's position on the matter is self-elected. He risks making his conclusions a rhetorical flourish. But what is to the point is that he has shown himself an active venturer through modern theories of the human condition, and through the dandies and stylists who abound in American life on the assimilation of such theories; and he has picked his own path, preferring the sceptical alienation of a Herzog living to the best amid the rich abundance of flexible ideas, or, in the new book, a Charlie Citrine hopping freely from the materialism to the idealism of American life and trusting in a resolution.

The result is visible in the form of his books. They are usually hero-centred and move, in Bellow's own phrase, to the rejection of superfluous ideas, to the first step out of bondage. Absurdity thus leads not to an extremist form of fiction, but to a modified realism, one in which mental adventure and the comedy of mental action plays an abundant part. In Bellow's work, the heroes live in a world of serious matters which is also a world of metaphysical farce, a world in which the measure of man is not quite taken, and shifts against history, but in which we are both grand and absurd, little and big. Herzog's madness is not simply the madness of inner extremity, nor of external pressure. It is the madness of simple self-knowledge, the knowledge that we are not stabilised at one level of existence or with one philosophy. They have, like Charlie Citrine, a "peculiar sense of existence"; Bellow is one of the great novelists of the attempt to reconcile the mind, in all its wonderful and inventive resources, with the burdensome body, the heavy weight of history, and the absurd, extravagant, materially rich modern environment, where, in turmoil and intellectual confusion, all men grope democratically for their existential rights, their entitlement toward extravagance and violence, their dandyish selfhood.

THESE CERTAINLY are the materials of *Humboldt's Gift*, an ebullient mental and historical comedy, rather in the manner of Bellow's middle work, though with some of the

[2] David Galloway, "*Mr Sammler's Planet:* Bellow's Failure of Nerve", *Modern Fiction Studies*, XIX, 1 (Spring 1973), pp. 17–28. Other critical views of Bellow are conveniently collected together in Irving Malin, ed., *Saul Bellow and the Critics* (Gotham Library, 1967).

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predominantly mental action of *Herzog* or *Sammler*. The book is long, loose and picaresque, moves expansively in time and space, from Chicago to New York to Texas and Spain, and has a hero busy with his late-life redemption. But perhaps the truest clue to its nature is Santayana's observation that American culture is divided at root between ideality and reality, for in its underflesh the book is an attempt at a culture-reading of an America split between overwhelming mass and material substance and the desire for mind, between the It and the We, and this problem is centrally focussed on the role of the artist.

THE NARRATOR AND CENTRAL character is Charlie Citrine, a successful writer in his fifties, a devotee of yoga postures and body-training exercises, who has now returned to the substantive materialism of Chicago, a city of mass, modernisation and change. Charlie sees the split between the painted veils and the big money, which, he says, Capitalism has given him for dark comical reasons of its own. But capitalism is getting its own back, and throughout the book Charlie is gradually divested of his wealth by various crooks, con-men and divorce-court artists. Philip Roth justly notes in *My Life as a Man* that the alimony battles that have raged through America's courtrooms over the last decades, "the way religious wars raged through Europe in the seventeenth century", have exposed matrimony as a cash institution. Such divorces have certainly raged through Bellow's work, but, happily for the book, more subtle experts have been picking Charlie's pockets, too, with fair comic verve, among them a not too successful racketeer named Rinaldo Cantabile, a *machismo* figure with a Ph.D.-candidate wife, and a well-breasted mistress named Renata (Citrine is contemporary enough to wish to sustain a high gratification threshold) who dumps her mother and her child in his care in Spain, while she takes off to marry a funeral director.

But the money is the world's money, and Charlie loses it with some sense of adventure, seeing virtue in the divestment. He is a man for whom the painted veil has been wearing thin, the imagination running into risk, and now he is in the process of breaking his spirit's sleep. His present disturbances bring back into posthumous life his friendship with Von Humboldt Fleisher, a poet and master-talker, part-modelled, Bellow has told us, on Delmore Schwartz.

Citrine has gone to Humboldt as his protégé when a young man, at a time when Humboldt was making his own attempt to reconcile the massiveness of the American universe with the Platonic ideas to which all matter must return;

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seeking to link Verlaine with the *Police Gazette*, the World Historical Individual with Harry Houdini—born in Citrine's own birthplace, Appleton, Wisconsin. Humboldt's has been one of those exemplary poetic careers of the mid-fifties; massive and successful, acclaimed as a major American poet, he has felt that culture is rising in America, and attempts to reconcile himself with politicians, foundations, and Princeton University; finally he slips into madness and death in a flophouse, becoming newly famous again for the success of his failure.

Just at this time Citrine has reached the height of his own success, consorting with the Kennedys, pushed by an ambitious wife who would make JFK "an excellent Secretary of State, if some way could be found to wake her before 11 a.m." Now it is Citrine who is in the middle of his struggles with the dominant American mass, his own ideal-and-reality problems. For him too the Platonic glimpses are fading, and Chicago, with its infinite lacks and voids and the tearing hungers they cause, becomes his testing place. Perhaps the greatest success in the book is in the creation of this new Chicago and its gallery of characters, a Chicago quite unlike that of *Augie March* and deep into the new American gratifications and anxieties.

"What we had in Chicago", Citrine notes, "was a cultureless city pervaded nevertheless by Mind." Like the early great novelists of the upstart city, Chicago, Norris, Dreiser and Sinclair, who presented a portrait of a bustling, commercial metropolis in which culture had been displaced, passed to the women or the idle rich who would add the leaven of mind to material substance, Bellow catches at the urban texture as the basis for a cultural probe. His Chicago embraces the Playboy Club and the Russian baths in the ghetto, the muggers and sudden deaths in the buses and the smell of the stockyards that persists sometimes long after their disappearance. But the present city dominates; and Citrine consorts with its hooligans and gangsters, con-men and lawyers, the embarrassing artist innocent in this unmitigated reality.

BUT THE SPECULATORS in profit are themselves now speculators in Mind. In the new dispensation, the new state of consciousness, culture and corruption are bound in symbiotic relationship, and the book is superbly peopled with characters who live in the strange hinterland, turning the book into one of Bellow's insistently contemporary portraits—which are essentially portraits of historical consciousness. Renata is a risky symbol of Platonic beauty; Cantabile insists on inserting himself into Citrine's life, to

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tie the new bond between the intellectual middle class and the con-man; ex-actors are construction men, fences are men of taste. Gangsterdom has grown commercial and respectable; art is hungry for the underworld of violence, for a higher gratification threshold, a greater intensity. Boredom seems the motor for life: men drive themselves to heart attacks playing racquet ball at the club, sexual gratification of all kinds is offered or is in the air, the texture of commercial success is dense, in the cabanas at the club pool old men seduce young mistresses. The style artists foregather, the decadence of a vile century abounds.

But Citrine, something of an expert on boredom, and writing on the subject, reflects that this is a world in which "nothing actual ever suits pure expectation and such purity of expectation is a great source of tedium." The lesson applies to himself, and since Citrine is a comic hero and a Houdini of the imagination, the innocent metaphysical farceur, some sort of final benison is hardly in doubt. He makes his way with fair skill through "the intellectual turmoil of the present age", and in this wins his way to Humboldt's final gift, the treatment of a film which is a fable of Citrine's own life, the story of the artist destroyed by success. This and an earlier script that Humboldt and Citrine had written together restore him to a certain measure of fortune. Humboldt merits an expensive modern burial, and amid rather tentative and uncertain ironies Citrine ends the book without mistress, without most of his money, without many of the promises fulfilled, but a "city boy", half-innocent, half-corrupt.

IT IS IN THE TRADITION of Bellow's more ambiguous endings, and Citrine leaves the book one of Bellow's lesser heroes. It is a just balance, though part of what is at stake is a failure of intensity in the later pages of the novel, once the Chicago sections are past. *Humboldt's Gift* is a very contemporary realisation of Bellow's talents for comedy, a comedy of genuine metaphysical intensity, but the reader must be prepared for certain longueurs and disappointments on his way. They are small, though, in return for the pleasures of a book invested with Bellow's intelligent deep comedy and his sense of historical motion ("History" says Humboldt, "is a nightmare during which I am trying to get a good night's sleep").

It is a late life book, the hero ageing, his body wearing, all too aware that the test of mortality which Humboldt reminds him of is not that far off. But the manner is immersed rather than ironic, far from that of *Sammler*, and it will stand as a serious addition to Bellow's now extraordinary canon, a testament to his range and versatility.

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Count Zero Splits the Infinite

Tom Stoppard's Plays—By CLIVE JAMES

HAVING MADE PUBLIC LOVE to Tom Stoppard by writing him a verse letter in the *New Statesman* and assigning him the dedication of my scurrilous epic *The Fate of Felicity Fark*, I feel honour bound to make the nature of my admiration clear, lest gossip columnists—whose appetite for the flesh of star playwrights has been very fierce of late—start swimming to the wrong conclusions. So this is necessarily a personal appraisal, and had better be prefaced by my disqualifications, the chief of which is a profound lack of sympathy with the contemporary theatre.

The distaste is made stronger by ignorance. I go very rarely to the theatre, for what seems to me the sound reason that anything so repellent in occasional doses would most probably be fatal if the doses were frequent: one would be more likely to share the doom of Charles Bravo than to acquire the immunity of Mithridates. Sedulous non-attendance has been my policy for years. Right from the beginning this plan paid dividends, except for an early tendency to pronounce more and more confidently upon the theatrical world the less I saw of it. But after one rare lapse, in which I fecklessly allowed myself to be present at the first night of John Osborne's *West of Suez*, it was brought home to me that the critical position best befitting aesthetic non-involvement is one of silence.

Appearing on the BBC's *Late Night Line-Up* half an hour after the curtain fell at the Royal Court, I announced that the weaknesses of *West of Suez* did not detract from Osborne's stature as Britain's leading contemporary dramatist.

My fellow panellist Benedict Nightingale, then as now drama critic of the *New Statesman*, looked astonished, but mercifully waited until later—instead of blowing the whistle right there on camera—to point out that since I had not even the vaguest idea of what most of the other contemporary dramatists were up to, my assertion was largely without meaning. Mulling over this reproof at length, I shamefacedly resolved that if I were to continue staying away from the theatre, I should suit the word to the deed by ceasing to be glibly knowing about what went on there. Indifference would from now on be bodied forth as taciturnity.

AND SO IT WAS until the middle of June 1974, when by a massive dereliction of duty I found myself committed to a four-week stint as a pundit on Radio 4's *Critic's Forum*, which involved seeing one play per week. This could have been a revelation of the wealth I had been missing, but in the event it was a searing exposure to mediocrity. At the ICA there was some load of semi-improvised flapdoodle about speakers at Hyde Park Corner, in which actors shouted from different parts of the room while the audience wandered about from one centre of alleged interest to the other, while I wandered in the opposite direction. At the Old Vic there was a new play by John Hopkins, whose reputation was for unflinching seriousness and rock-like integrity. The piece had not a scintilla of invention in its whole length, its sole point of interest being the programme note by the author, revealing a marvellous conceit about the pain that composing the play had cost him, which could not have been half the pain that seeing it cost me. Harold Pinter was the producer, and it was difficult to say whether he had found yet deeper levels of tedium in the text itself, or had merely added some tedium of his own. The third week's agony I have repressed entirely. Perhaps it was a whodunnit. I think I took refuge in sleep, or in trying to remember the rhyme-scheme of the villanelle.

The fourth offering was hailed as a "blazing masterpiece" by Harold Hobson and taken with protracted seriousness even by those critics who did not find it wholly successful. It was *Life Class*, by David Storey—a tub of metaphysical sludge stirred into the semblance of activity by Lindsay Anderson. As usual with any theatrical venture involving Anderson, Storey and the actor Alan Bates, the arts pages had been full for days about their collective daring and respective spiritual quests. Anderson is the master of the pre-emptive strike: he once even managed to place an article in the *Observer* explaining why the reviews of his forthcoming film were bound to miss its point. For *Life Class* the ground had been so thoroughly prepared that it would have taken unheard-of independence of mind for any of the regular critics to demur. I was regarded as eccentric for contending on *Critic's Forum* that in the matter of *Life Class* the question of which direction Storey's work was taking did not meaningfully arise, since the only direction this particular script should have taken was towards

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the waste-paper basket. The characters were half unrealised, which is not the same as universality; the dialogue was unspeakable, which is not the same as authenticity; and the theme was fumbled, which is not the same as exploration. Lindsay Anderson's contribution was principally manifest as a not always infallible capacity, when an actor was talking, to move other actors away from in front of him.

AND SO A MONTH which had passed like a year in hospital came to an end. All my suspicions of the theatrical world having been confirmed in spades, I promised myself faithfully never to go near it again in all my life. But scarcely another week had gone by before this contract was rescinded. My agent rang to say she had a ticket going begging for the first night of Tom Stoppard's new play *Travesties*. My reaction to such generosity would have been an instantaneous and foul-mouthed refusal, if it had not mercifully occurred to me that Stoppard—none of whose plays, not even *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, I had ever seen—was generally famed for being devoid of the qualities which those authors whose latest triumphs I had just suffered through were supposed to possess in such abundance. People whose seriousness I had good cause to dread had told me that Stoppard's plays were only revue-sketches. That sounded promising. True, Harold Hobson's oft-trumpeted insistence that Stoppard was brilliantly entertaining persuasively suggested that he wasn't, but not even Hobson can be wrong all the time. Like Saint-Exupéry wooing the one last crash that would prove fatal, I fell into a taxi and headed for the Aldwych.

BEFORE JOHN WOOD was half-way through his opening speech I already knew that in Stoppard I had encountered a writer of my generation whom I could admire without reserve. It is a common reaction to *Travesties* to say that seeing it is like drinking champagne. But not only did I find that the play tasted like champagne—I found that in drinking it I felt like a jockey. Jockeys drink champagne as an everyday tipple, since it goes to the head without thickening the waist. *Travesties* to me seemed not an exotic indulgence, but the stuff of life. Its high speed was not a challenge but a courtesy; its structural intricacy not a dazzling pattern but a perspicuous design; its fleeting touch not of a feather but of a fine needle. For me *Travesties* was a personal revelation, which is one of the reasons why I have begun with a personal note. But *caveat lector*: my knowledge of the theatrical world is not much wider than it ever was. And the other Stoppard plays, though I will certainly see them

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when the opportunity arises, I have so far only read, so there are two likely sources of distortion: an estimate of Stoppard's place in the theatre based mainly on Stoppard, and an estimate of Stoppard's drama based mainly on the text. A double-dyed literary approach.

Ronald Hayman's profile of Stoppard in the *New Review* for December 1974 is the best thing on its subject which has thus far appeared. It would be supererogatory, as well as very difficult, to cover the same ground on my own account, and a good deal of what I think about Stoppard I owe in the first instance to Hayman, who in turn owes a good deal to Stoppard, since no author has ever done a better job of explaining himself—he is a dream interviewee, talking in eerily quotable sentences whose English has the faintly extraterritorial perfection of a Conrad or a Nabokov. Extraterritorial and perhaps even extraterrestrial: in this respect as in so many others, Stoppard can sometimes give you the impression that he is from Out There.

UNLESS YOU KNEW that all its stars lie at different distances and are of different intensities, it would be impossible to guess that the constellation called the Plough does not look like a plough. Equally, unless you knew that from a certain point the appropriate picture forms, it would be impossible to guess that the same aggregate of stars *does* look like a plough, and acquires a name. Either kind of knowledge, or else a bewitching combination of them both, is constantly at work in Stoppard's writings.[1]

In *After Magritte* the curtain rises on an inexplicable-looking stage picture which is explained piece by piece, thereby gradually ceasing to be that picture. When the picture reforms, we know what has caused everything in it: more intelligible, it is less coherent, riddled by our awareness and with all its virginity spent. The escalating bravura—the playwright's enthralling ability to keep on casting light on the unlikely until there is nothing left of it—compensates for the declining mystery, until finally the disappointment of having no puzzle left to solve is transmuted into the pleasure of seeing how perfectly it has all come out. So one kind of childish pleasure modulates into another, with Stoppard knowing very well how children like to be teased: 23 pages after we first see them, we are told just enough to enable us to deduce for ourselves that Harris's waders are employed for changing lightbulbs—and so we are surprised by our own perceptiveness at the very moment when the extraordinary becomes ordinary.

Similarly in the radio play *Artist Descending a Staircase*, a seemingly random stretch of jumbled talk and noise bit by bit becomes comprehensible, exchanging one kind of vividness for another, since by the time we learn that the smacking sound means Beauchamp is trying to swat a fly, it is time for us to assume that Beauchamp is trying to swat a fly when he is actually thumping a desk. We had the experience but missed the meaning. (Almost any quotation you can think of from Eliot—or from Joyce or Beckett—is relevant to Stoppard, who is soaked in all three.) But then Stoppard takes the device a further stage, into a territory which we ought to recognise, I think, as entirely his. The original smacking sound returns, but this time it means that Donner is hitting Beauchamp.

IT ISN'T SO MUCH that the one sound contains multiple meanings, as that it has a different meaning in different places. Stoppard is at his weakest when his Joycean ambiguities are just that and no more—leftover puns from *Finnegans Wake*, slipping from one sketchy context to another just for the sake of proving their mobility, as if the *Philosophical Investigations* needed further illustrating. But he is at his strongest when one precise meaning is transformed into another precise meaning with the context full-blown in each case. It is an elementary point to prove that a word can mean anything we choose it to mean. Many of us must have sometimes felt, when reading the later Wittgenstein, that he is not really saying anything about *words* which Lewis Carroll didn't say equally succinctly. The later Wittgenstein is in this regard the obverse of the early one, only instead of saying that a word is attached to something in the world he is saying that it is not. The early position refuted itself, and the later one needs no proof—artistic endorsements of it are doomed to triviality.

But Stoppard is not really concerned to say that words can mean anything. That is what is supposed to be wrong with Beauchamp's *musique concrète*—it tries to mean anything and condemns itself to meaning nothing. It is the plurality of contexts that concerns Stoppard: ambiguities are just places where contexts join. And although

[1] Tom Stoppard's novel *Lord Malquist and Mr Moon* was first published by Anthony Blond in 1966, and reissued by Faber in 1974 at £1.80. Details of the published plays, with date of first publication and current price, are as follows. All are published by Faber. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*. 1967. £1.50, paper 65p. *The Real Inspector Hound*. 1968. 65p. *Enter A Free Man*. 1969. £1.75, paper 70p. *Albert's Bridge* and *If You're Glad I'll be Frank* (radio plays). 1969. 60p. *After Magritte*. 1971. 65p. *Jumpers*. 1972. £1.80, paper 75p. *Artist Descending a Staircase* and *Where are They Now?* (radio plays). 1973. £1.95, paper 80p. *Travesties*. 1975. £2.50, paper 95p.

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Stoppard's transitions and transformations of context might be thought of, either pejoratively or with approval, as games, the games are, it seems to me, at least as serious as Wittgenstein's language games—although finally, I think, the appropriate analogies to Stoppard's vision lie just as much in modern physics as in modern philosophy.

EVEN AMONG THOSE who profess to admire his skill, it is often supposed that there is something coldly calculated about Stoppard's technique. By mentioning his work in the same breath with modern physics one risks abetting that opinion. But there is no good reason to concede that modern physics is cold, or even that to be calculating precludes creativity. Guildenstern is not necessarily right when he tells Rosencrantz (in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*) that all would be lost if their spontaneity turned out to be part of another order—one of the play's themes is that Chance, while looking deterministic if seen from far enough away, is random enough from close to. Both views are real, just as the two different views of the Plough are real. It could even be assumed that each viewpoint is fixed. That would be a Newtonian picture of Stoppard's universe, and like the Newtonian picture of the real universe could go a long way towards explaining everything in it.

But physics, to the small extent that I understand it, ceased being Newtonian and started being modern when Einstein found himself obliged to rule out the possibility of a viewpoint at rest. Nobody could now believe that Einstein did this in order to be less precise—he did it in order to be precise over a greater range of events than Newtonian mechanics could accurately account for. *Mutatis mutandis*, Stoppard abandons fixed viewpoints for something like the same reason. The analogy is worth pursuing because it leads us to consider the possibility that Stoppard's increasingly apparent intention to create a dramatic universe of perpetual transformations might also spring from the impulse to clarify.

It is perhaps because there is little recognisably *mystical* about him—scarcely a hint of the easy claim to impenetrability—that people are inclined to call Stoppard cold. It might have been a comfort to them if Stoppard had rested content with merely saying: listen, what looks odd when you stand over There is perfectly reasonable if you stand over Here, whereupon the place you left begins looking odd in its turn. That would have been relativity of a manageable Newtonian kind, which anyone patient enough could have hoped

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to follow. But Stoppard added: and now that you're Here, you ought to know that Here is on its way to somewhere else, just as There is, and always was. That was Einstein's kind of relativity —a prospect much less easily grasped. In fact grasping doesn't come into it. There is not much point in the layman trying to grasp that the relative speed of two objects rushing away from each other at the speed of light is still the speed of light. What he needs to realise is that no other explanation fits the facts. Similarly with Stoppard's dramatic equivalent of the space-time continuum: it exists to be ungraspable, its creator having discovered that no readily appreciable conceptual scheme can possibly be adequate to the complexity of experience. The chill which some spectators feel at a Stoppard play is arriving from infinity.

CRITICAL TALK about "levels of reality" in a play commonly assumes that one of the posited levels is *really* real. By the same token, it would be reasonable to assume that although everything in a Stoppard play is moving, the play itself is a system at rest. But in Stoppard's universe no entity, not even a work of art, is exempt from travel. *The Importance of Being Earnest* is moving through *Travesties* like one stream of particles through another, the points of collision lighting up as pastiche. The same kind of interpenetration was already at work in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, through which the play *Hamlet* made a stately transit like a planet encountering a meteor shower, and with the same pyrotechnic consequences.

"Every exit", the Player tells Rosencrantz, "is an entrance somewhere else." The idea holds true for both space and time. In *The Real Inspector Hound* Felicity repeatedly enters at the same moment to instigate different versions of the action. In *Travesties* Tristan Tzara enters up-stage to begin a scene and later exits stage-right uttering the same initial line, so that the exit becomes an entrance in a play (the *other* play) speeding away from us into the off-prompt wing. It isn't helpful to call such effects dazzling, since they are not meant to dazzle nor be effects—they are glimpses into the kaleidoscope of possibilities, devices by which you see further. They are Stoppard's own and growing artistic realisation of the hero's view from on high in the radio play *Albert's Bridge*, whose text is perhaps the most easily approachable example of Stoppard's fascination with the long straight lines—curves of infinite radius—leading up to and away from here and now.

IN A BODY OF WORK which is otherwise conspicuously impersonal, Albert is probably the character who comes closest to representing Stoppard the

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artist. Albert is at a point detached enough for arbitrariness to look like order. Fraser, Albert's opposing voice, might usefully be held to represent Stoppard the man—Stoppard when he is not detached. Fraser lives down among the chaos, where he sees it to be a sheer fluke that the right number of people who do not want to milk cows do want to fill teeth and vice versa. Finding the perception intolerable, he chooses suicide. But climbing the bridge in order to jump off it, he sees things from Albert's viewpoint, loses the desire to die, and goes back down, where he sees it to be a sheer fluke that the right number . . . and so on, in a reticulation as endless as painting the bridge. Neither Albert nor Fraser can be right alone.

Here and now in Stoppard is a time and place defined by an infinite number of converging vectors each heading towards it at the speed of light and steadily slowing down to nothing before passing through it and speeding up again. Ignoring for the moment that the still point is itself moving, here and now is what things tend towards, with a tantalising slowness as they swell into proximity. In this resides much of the significance of Stoppard's fascination with Zeno's paradox—the asymptotic frustration by which the hare never quite catches up with the tortoise. In *Jumpers*, George Moore the philosopher (the *other* George Moore the philosopher) concludes that since the arrow could not have quite reached Saint Sebastian he must have died of fright. It is a fabulous joke but there is fear in it—the awe of watching a slow approach down long perspectives.

Guildenstern says that the more witnesses who attest to the remarkable the thinner it gets and the more reasonable it becomes until it is thin as reality. Here and now is Zero—a word which rings like a gnomic tocsin in Beckett's *Endgame* and arrives in Stoppard's plays as a developed vision. (The word itself passes through like a micro-meteorite during the Farjeonesque game of bridge in *The Real Inspector Hound*.) Stoppard has gradually become more and more capable of bodying this vision forth, but the vision was there at the beginning of his drama and indeed before the beginning. In his novel *Lord Malquist and Mr Moon*, Mr Moon is sick with his secret knowledge of the long perspectives, just as Rosencrantz feels sick when he looks into the audience (an echo, but more than an echo, of Clov's similarly bleak gaze in *Endgame*), or Gladys the TIM girl feels sick when she looks down the well of time in the radio play *If You're Glad I'll Be Frank*. But not even madness can make a coherent whole of all Moon sees. Moon is appalled by the shift of a glacier that leads to a man straightening his tie. "But if it's all random", he asks Lady Malquist, "what's the point?" And

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when she replies "What's the point if it's all inevitable?" he can't deal with the answer.

Moon can't take a side for fear of disappearing into it. He takes both parts, "refuting myself and rebutting the refutation." Moon is a guarantee that the supposedly passionless intricacies of Stoppard's plays have all unfolded from a preliminary intuition of extreme intensity. Moon is Stoppard before Albert and Fraser separated and met each other on the bridge. "He held the vapours in his cupped hands but they would not crystallise." In the plays, they do.

FROM *Enter A Free Man* to *Travesties* is a long way. Stoppard's habit of cannibalising old situations to make new ones tends to suggest repetitiveness but really he has been expanding his scope all the time. Take the meticulously extended preparation for the gag about the Rule Britannia clock in *Enter A Free Man*. In that apprentice work such devices are at first sight tangential enough to seem merely cosmetic. But hindsight reveals that they constitute the play's real originality. Otherwise the plot is like one of Ibsen's turned on its head, with the daughter continually telling her father the truth about himself, instead of the saving lie. The eccentric atmosphere suggests Saroyan's *The Time of Your Life*, which in its turn was more solidly in the Broadway tradition than people thought at the time. If Stoppard had never written anything subsequently, we might think of Riley's indoor rain as being a nod to N. F. Simpson, and the concern with Time to be like J. B. Priestley's, or Christopher Fry's, or, at best, T. S. Eliot's. But in retrospect the architecture looks like decoration and the decoration looks like architecture.

In all the subsequent plays the texture is composed entirely of interweaving preparation. By the time of *Jumpers* it takes the whole play for the separate stories of the tortoise and the hare to catch up with each other—Zeno's paradox resolved at the intersection of long lines of coincidence. And in *Travesties* we find the long lines turning into curves, the planes curving into spheres, and the spheres making music.

And if the music of the spheres sounds cold, would it be more convincing if it sounded warm? There is abundant evidence in Stoppard's plays to show that he is as capable of emotion as anybody. In *Enter A Free Man* Linda is a finely tuned moral invention whose equivalents we might well miss in the later plays, if we really thought they should be there. The mainspring of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* is the perception—surely a compassionate one—that the fact of their deaths mattering so little to Hamlet was something which ought to have mattered to Shakespeare. And in the radio play *Where Are They Now*? there is a flaring moment of generous anger against the school system which turned childhood into a hell of pointless competition. "Where are they now?" people ask about all those young winners, and Gale, putting things in perspective on behalf of all the losers, bitterly asks "Where were they then?"

There is plenty to indicate that if Stoppard had done no more than employ the drama as a vehicle for moral messages he would still have been a force in the theatre. The playwrights who grapple with those issues supposedly too weighty for Stoppard's frivolous talent are likely to have been inspired by a view of their task which is not only less comprehensive than Stoppard's but less penetrating. Stoppard leaves them behind not because he can't do what they can do, but because he can do what they can do so easily. ("What's wrong with bad art", he told Ronald Hayman "is that the artist knows exactly what he's doing.")

IN FACT THE WEAKNESSES of *Travesties*, such as they are, seem to me to crop up in those places where Stoppard atavistically makes concessions to the standard theatrical conception of human warmth. This, I think, is the real problem with the Lenin role, which is recognised by everyone—including the author—to be a small but troublesome spanner in the play's glistening works. It is generally supposed that there is not much in the part for an actor to bite on. My own view is the opposite: I think there is too much. As it happened, the part was wrongly cast in both runs of the production. In the first run Lenin was too sympathetic and in the second he was too diffident. (It is a measure of the play's robustness, incidentally, that it could survive weak casting even among the principal roles. In the second run James Joyce could neither sing nor dance and threw away his key speech on the first night.)

But even if Lenin had been played up to the

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full power inherent in the role he would still have stood revealed as a personality conceived in terms of show-biz meatiness, with a built-in conflict to suggest complexity. In *Travesties* Lenin is polarised rather too easily between ruthlessness and an appreciation of creative achievement, the latter quality having apparently been extrapolated from his well-known contention that the *Appassionata* moved him to tears. But the real-life Lenin was not divided along so elementary a line. Stoppard emphasises Lenin's self-contradictions at the expense of playing down his monolithic purposefulness—a purposefulness which we can scarcely begin to contemplate without raising the question of Evil. There is less to the *complexity*, and more to the *force*, of Lenin's personality than Stoppard allows. Lenin's historical significance doesn't even begin to be reconciled within a scheme that adduces Tristan Tzara and James Joyce as revolutionary exemplars, and by suggesting that it does, Stoppard starts a hare which really never *can* catch the tortoise.

This is not to say that Stoppard is disqualified from treating tough subjects. Quite the reverse. In my admittedly limited experience it has usually been the playwrights already famous for treating them who are disqualified, and in the long run it is more likely to be Stoppard who says what counts on the subject of, say, the Final Solution—even if he never approaches it more than tangentially. But Stoppard's is an aesthetic which demands an unfalteringly sensitive apprehension of the real world. A moment's coarseness and the game is lost: astrophysics becomes Construct-O-Straws.

AT THEIR BEST, Stoppard's heady dramatic designs impress us not as deliberately sophisticated variations on the reality we know but as simplified models of a greater reality—the inhuman cosmos which contains the human world, the amoral vastness in which morality is a local accident, the totality from whose perimeter we look like—Zero. ("Nothing", Lord Malquist tells Mr Moon, "is the history of the world viewed from a suitable distance.") Stoppard's triumph—which he does not share with Priestley, Fry or Eliot any more than he shares it with *Star Trek* or *Dr Who*—is to have created this impression not through vagueness but through precision. When Stoppard tells *One Pair of Eyes* that "Tom Stoppard doesn't *know*" he doesn't mean that he sees virtue in confusion but that he sees the actual as a realised possibility. If his speculative scope recalls modern physics, his linguistic rigour recalls modern philosophy. It is a potent combination whatever its validity.

And if the whole vaultingly clever enterprise

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turned out to be merely intuitive—well, what is so mere about that? It might be only in Stoppard's enchanted playground that the majestic inevitabilities of General Relativity can be reconciled with the Uncertainty Principle or quantum physics, but Einstein's life-long search for the Unified Field was the same game, and *he* believed in intuition. He also believed in *Einfühlung*—the intellectual love for the objects of experience. Just such a love, it seems to me, is at work in Stoppard's writing, lending it a poetry which is as far beyond sentimentality as his ebullient detachment is beyond the arrogant solipsism which commonly passes for commitment.

Mañana Is Now

New Poetry—By DOUGLAS DUNN

A NEW ANTHOLOGY edited by Colin Falck and Ian Hamilton—*Poems since 1900*[1]—prints poems from Thomas Hardy to Geoffrey Hill. These editors disembarrass themselves from any estimate of contemporaneity simply by omitting younger poets, finding that they cannot, as yet, make what "balanced judgments" or "reliable discriminations" are necessary to their critical method of anthologising. Such care for "balance" and "reliability" is laudable; it should not, on the other hand, create a state of mind in which contemporary "judgments" and "discriminations" are so easily postponed. Confronted with the question, "What about younger poets?", Mr Falck and Mr Hamilton reply, from beneath their sombreros, "Mañana."

While these two characters are pretending not to sleep, others are publishing books of poems. Seamus Heaney's *North*[2] is his fourth; Derek Mahon's *The Snow Party*[3] is his third; Hugo Williams's *Some Sweet Day*[4] is also his third.

Heaney's imagination is as fascinated with language itself as the subjects and concerns which elicit language from him. Since he considers poetry to be "craft", or, in the language of *Tel Quel, un travail,* it was probably inevitable that Heaney's word-obsession should have grown into a conspicuous part of his past-orientated thematic sweep. It was already marked enough in *Wintering Out*, in, for instance, "Traditions"—

> *our guttural muse*
> *was bulled long ago*
> *by the alliterative tradition . . .*

while in *North*, he writes in "Bone Dreams",

> *I push back*
> *through dictions,*
> *Elizabethan canopies.*
> *Norman devices . . .*
>
> *to the scop's*
> *twang, the iron*
> *flash of consonants*
> *cleaving the line.*

Heaney's is almost a poetry of "felt philology." That poems can be made from fascinations with "word-hoards" far back in the ancestral past, from what he calls "the coffered riches of grammar and declensions", is just as true as the fact that poems can be found anywhere else. What he appears to be doing is to associate the craft of poetry itself with his identification of a native Irish culture, and the larger Northern civilisation of which it was, or is, a part. "I step through origins", he writes in "Kinship",

> *like a dog turning*
> *its memories of wilderness*
> *on the kitchen mat . . .*

which gives his imaginative enterprise a defeatedly ironic tone. He is expressing separation from these "origins" which are otherwise suggested as a source of renewal. Of this "outback of my mind", he says

> *This centre holds*
> *and spreads,*
> *sump and seedbed,*
> *a bag of waters*
>
> *and a melting grave.*

So there is an Irish assertion afoot, or underfoot, as Heaney defines "bog", this "ruminant ground" of the essence of Irish landscape, the "goddess" of his people and their loves and terrors.

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[1] *Poems Since 1900.* Edited by COLIN FALCK and IAN HAMILTON. Macdonald & Janes, £3.50.
[2] *North.* By SEAMUS HEANEY. Faber & Faber, £2.95, paper £1.75.
[3] *The Snow Party.* By DEREK MAHON. Oxford University Press, £1.75.
[4] *Some Sweet Day.* By HUGO WILLIAMS. Oxford University Press, £1.95.

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HEANEY'S MERGING of the historical with the personal makes it possible for him to engage with the sensation of mysteries ineluctably associated with national culture at a poetically authentic level. One of the most remarkable qualities of his writing is that it is national in the most acceptable sense of the word. There is no deafening chauvinism; his meanings are gently pressed from the background to the front. He saves the reader from having to think about his meanings as "claims" or arguments; instead, they are recognisably parts of poems.

The last poem of Part 1 of *North*, "Hercules and Antaeus", takes us back to its beginning, the first poem "Antaeus." I see the sub-allegorical function of these mythological persons, but wish it could have been done otherwise. Antaeus, the wrestler, son of the Earth Mother, could never be defeated so long as any part of him touched the Earth from which he drew his strength. His "elevation" is his "fall", says the first poem, a paradox with, I suspect, an Irish meaning—that is, though tentatively, the rise of modern Ireland denying and destroying its own cultural origins. For in "Hercules and Antaeus" the defeated wrestler is seen lifted by triumphant Hercules—

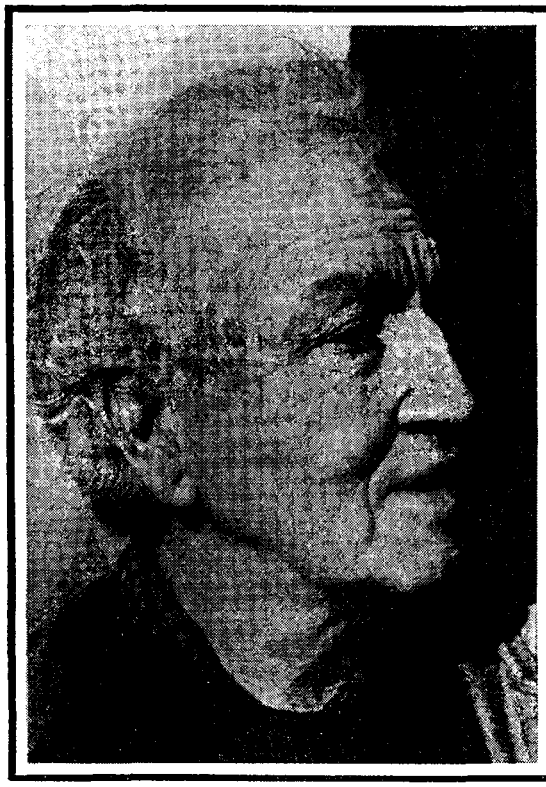
high as a profiled ridge,
a sleeping giant,
pap for the dispossessed.

Apart from the defeated ring of "dispossessed", a word which sends its sad meaning back through the book, these three lines have more Gaelic lore than meets the eye. There is a mountain in Kerry called The Paps (and the Paps of Jura in Scotland). Mulls, peninsulas and some islands are, at least in Scotland and I should think in Ireland, too, often referred to by the elderly as "the sleeping warrior/giant/soldier." As a child the Mull of Kintyre's silhouette at dusk was pointed out to me as the warrior who would rise again when the A' Ghàidhealtachd was in trouble.

It has of course been in deep trouble since the 16th century. Air, ingenuity, reason, "progress", defeated the

black powers
feeding off the territory.

Heaney identifies Antaeus with Balor, Byrthnoth and Sitting Bull. Balor (Balar úa Néid) was king of the Fomorians, king of the aboriginal gods of Erin to whom the invading Milesians and Celts were hostile. He was slain by Lugh. Balor and



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Lugh are invoked in a 16th-century Gaelic poem addressed to the Earl of Argyll before the Battle of Flodden in which Balor is likened to Saxon tyranny and Lugh is the source of salvation. The analogue, therefore, has been used before.

The second part of *North* is written in an entirely different manner. Instead of Tacitus, Ralegh and Balor, names like Billy Hunter, Cruise O'Brien and Katherine Mansfield become the nominal properties. Heaney writes about what in quoted journalese he calls "the Irish thing"—

Of the "wee six" I sing
Where to be saved you only must save face
And whatever you say, you say nothing.

Anger and fright are laconically handled—

Is there a life before death? That's chalked up
In Ballymurphy.

Heaney's manner in the six poems of his series "Singing School" will appeal to those who claim Heaney's earlier poems—"Digging" and "Follower", for example—as still his best. They are, I feel, wrong. He does know how to conduct a narrative for its best effects, but the denser poems of the first part of the book reveal "Singing School" as a sort of journalism. At the same time it is probably responsible of Heaney to have left this looser stylistic option open at a time in Ireland when its poets may feel a withdrawal into pre-political realms of gold all too tempting.

IF EVENTS IN IRELAND have been thought malefic in their relations to the art of poetry (as they are to almost everything else) then that may be the reason why Heaney and Derek Mahon have both maintained two distinct styles apiece. One can be used for the racial-*cum*-archaeological manoeuvres of their imaginations, or simply the lyricism towards which they are drawn by temperament, and another for more direct utterance, for the kind of poem which, in their Irish circumstances, is expected of them.

The formula is too simple, and suggests a similarity between Heaney and Mahon which doesn't exist. Mahon's art is one of elegance, in which the assurance of his skill aspires to suavity, to an ease of writing in which the labour of making will be inconspicuous but impressive. Heaney's poems on the other hand are hewn, as if he wants to give the impression that, like Gaelic poets of old, he composes in the dark with a boulder on his chest. Mahon is also less immersed in the culture and history of Ireland. He

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appears to be re-enacting the Irish gesture of flight from possible parochialism towards a more sophisticated milieu of Europe complicated by home-looking, by the love-hate affections of the literary exile.

Yet it is these glances towards home, or, rather, intense stares productive of irascibility or melancholy, that, at present, predominate. This happens virtually on account of the over-literariness of many of his other poems. "Hommage to Malcolm Lowry", "After Nerval", or "Epitaph for Flann O'Brien" are examples. No matter the sincerity of these genuflections, Mahon's cleverness, wit, and grace are preferable when working against less literary subjects. "Cavafy", for instance, though literary enough in its origins, is an exhilarating series of poems.

Mahon's image of enchantment is summarised for him in the life of the gipsies. He has written about this in his earlier books. In the new collection he imitates a poem by Philippe Jaccottet, "Les Gitanes." A world of bandana and banjo, sing-songs under the stars at places with no disheartening historical associations—it looks like self-indulgence, though Mahon is too alert to allow his writing to create anything so inept.

MAHON'S CONSCIOUSNESS controls his imagination, as it must, to save the integrity of imagination and prevent it from being the repository of mere longings.

I wake in a dark flat
To the soft roar of the world.
Pigeons neck on the white
Roofs as I draw the curtains
And look out over London
Rain-fresh in the morning light.

This is our element, the bright
Reason on which we rely
For the long-term solutions.

So begins "Afterlives." Like many of his poems it is addressed to a particular recipient. By 2050 the Californians will be writing *Irish Verse Letters: The 20th-century Moment*. Yet there is something humane and significant about the fact that Irish poets swap poems so frequently. For the opening of "Afterlives" soon warps to

The orators yap, and guns
Go off in a back street . . .

while the poem goes on to be explicit in its reply to the Troubles, their intrusions on the creative psyche, and the unease, at once affectionate and accusatory, of not being there to live through it. That, too, is summed up in the title poem—

Thousands have died since dawn
In the service
of barbarous kings—

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But there is silence
In the houses of Nagoya
And the hills of Ise.

Japanese mythology might here coincide with the Irish legend used in "The Last of the Fire Kings." Ise is the shrine to the Japanese Sun-Goddess, while the "Fire-King" poem presumably refers to the Irish feast of Beltane. This celebration of summer by fire—and the god of it, significantly, is as much associated with death as fertility—explains the "ancient curse" mentioned in the poem. Again, however, it's a poem of posited escapes reconsidered as unworthy or impossible. In this case personified Irish history cannot escape from what it has itself contrived.

Last of the fire kings, I shall
Break with tradition and

Die by my own hand
Rather than perpetuate
The barbarous cycle.

Five years I have reigned . . .

The "cold dream" which the fire king perfects is "a place out of time, a palace of porcelain" populated by fruit eaters—that is, a characteristic dream of the South by those who live in the North. The fire-loving people won't allow it, "rightly perhaps"—

Demanding that I inhabit,
Like them a world of
Sirens, bin-lids,
And bricked-up windows . . .

(an earlier version of the poem had "And consensus politics")

Not to release them
From the ancient curse
But to die their creature and be thankful.

"Thammuz" is a revision of "What Will Remain" in *Lives*. The new title is a clue to a poem I had only half-understood. Thammuz is a Babylonian god who dies at the end of summer and is born again in spring—you can read about him in *Paradise Lost*, Book 3. The chance of rebirth and its association with persistence are standard themes in Mahon's imagination.

THE FINEST POEM in *The Snow Party* is "A Disused Shed in Co. Wexford." The poem starts with a literary occasion, but Mahon leaps over the possible limitations of that; the poem blazes off the page, and is the consummation of his writing so far, simply one of the finest poems of the decade. There is nothing wrong with it; and the same can be said for "The Banished Gods."

To say of a poem that there's "nothing wrong with it" might sound as grudging as the terms of

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praise said to be characteristic of the great jazz player, the late Pee Wee Russell—"it doesn't bother me." But I think it's true praise. Neither Mahon nor Hugo Williams, though, is a poet of negative virtues, writing tight little syntactical perfections which protect, lovingly, a single precious image. Mahon's "elegance" is more significant than that; he is not playing for safety but living up to a subjectively formed stylistic ideal within which he can be seen to *perform* in language without sacrificing what he feels for his concerns.

HUGO WILLIAMS'S extraordinary imagination, however, is open to the sort of carping which these days is reserved for the short lyrical poem of experience. On the page, his poems do look wistful, stray, floating on the warm ice of the paper. That he writes like a young poet invented by Chekhov, a young poet exiled to his uncle's country estate for some unspeakable social gaffe, probably doesn't make his acceptance any easier. His lyricism creates a fragile, haunting beauty that a reader might find difficult to catch. In "The Expatriates", he writes

The vineyard where we live
The one we draw about us on summer nights
Has influenced our poetry
The way it flavours its watermelons with silence.

Although the poem reflects the *chinoiserie* of its influences, it is hard to deny its beauty, and its simplicity, or, for that matter, its surprise.

For the gentle pace with which Williams unfolds his perceptions, he is, I think, unrivalled among contemporary British poets. "The Stampede", a poem about water buffalo "knee-deep in centuries", ends—

From underneath their feet,
From underneath the clouds they are standing in,
A ripple is spreading
Which will muddy the stars.

The poem shows the originality of his imagination, which works at the level of converting what might have been seen into the poetic world where phenomena are not so much perceived as reinvented.

While his imagination is entirely eccentric, but personal, refusing to share itself with concerns external to what it is naturally attracted towards, and certainly not theoretical, there is something *avant-garde* about Williams's poems. They have the sense of a thought dawning on a person, not in the terms of intellect, but in the language of how, uniquely, they are seen in the imagination. "Low Tide", which, like "Tavistock Square", is a domestic, marital poem, is an example—

Up there
Near the ceiling of our room
Is the high water mark.

Our dreams
Have fallen away from us.
We were almost real.

The poem has its melody, though it is not that of metrical design, not the audible tune of rhyme, metre, assonance and alliteration. Though I am far from despising these, contemporary poetry has placed much value on another sort of melody, one you can hardly hear, which, if neither abstract or inaudible, is still musical. Mahon writes,

Listening, we hear again,
Like music at night,
The original poetry of our lives.

The music is life itself, of struggle in nebulous and uncertain reality, of aspiration in silence among mute, disenchanted residues of nature and the man-made.

The honeysuckle the blackberry
They laugh at history

And the cobweb is the secret score
To the music we are searching for

Williams writes, in "The Boy in the Bell."

THOUGH I MIGHT WISH for the integration of these gently ushered perceptions into a more generously social understanding of the world in Williams's work and, as with Mahon, for less value placed on the prestige of the delicate touch, their imaginations, and the uses to which they have already put them are utterly authentic, utterly contemporary, and utterly worthwhile. These terms apply to Seamus Heaney's poems as well—indeed, we had better start asserting the quality of much contemporary poetry before we are forced to suffer the shame of having been seen not to have noticed it in its own day.

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AUTHORS & CRITICS

Crimes or Sins?

After the Last Secret

By Nicholas Bethell

"IT'S BEEN A BLACK MARK on my life. I absolutely loathed it," says Brigadier E. Tryon-Wilson, the British officer who in 1945 negotiated with Red Army officers the forcible delivery of Cossacks who had fought on the German side. But to Colonel Alec Malcolm, the man whose battalion fought a pitched battle to load several thousand Cossack women and children into eastward-bound trains, it was just another job that had to be done: "I have thought about it when reminded by you or by others, but it does not prey on my mind. . . ."

General Sir Geoffrey Musson, then Malcolm's brigadier, feels no personal responsibility for the part he played in violent operations against unarmed prisoners. "A soldier is an agent of Government policy, and if he is given an order it is his duty to point out the repercussions and any facts that may not be known to his superiors —but, having made those representations, he must carry out the order. He is not in a position to judge the rights and wrongs of any particular case." This view has produced an explosion of disagreement from General Sir Horatius Murray, who served with Musson in Austria at the time. "Balderdash!" says Murray. "I think it's childish. A general isn't a lance-corporal. He should interpret his orders in the light of conditions on the ground and act accordingly. If there's really no way out and he believes that what he's been ordered to do is wrong, he should resign!"

These conflicting statements will interest Alexander Solzhenitsyn, who has written with some bitterness of the former American and British policy of forcible repatriation of all Soviet citizens. "It is truly the last secret of the Second World War, or one of the last," he writes in *The Gulag Archipelago*. The fate of the Cossacks, many of whom he met in the camps, has touched his heart and provoked him to anger: "They were delivered in a perfidious way, typical of traditional British diplomacy." He said in an interview printed in the March ENCOUNTER:

> "The British public did nothing to prevent it, showed no interest in it and has done nothing to explain it. That is why we have formed the impression that the whole English people has committed a sin, because they have shown no repentance for their action, they have not investigated it, they have not renounced it and they have made no attempt to put it right."

Solzhenitsyn is not entirely correct here because, as the above remarks show, some at least of the perpetrators have now confessed and repented, thus hoping to absolve themselves of the sin. But others do still maintain that they were right to send the Russians back to Stalin by force. A few—most notably the architect of the whole policy, Anthony Eden—refuse to discuss the issue at all. For such people Solzhenitsyn would probably, to judge from his previous utterances, reserve strong words of moral rebuke.

For those who refuse to recant the only salvation would appear to lie in the theory that they did not sin in the first place. And they are indeed defended by Professor Hugh Trevor-Roper in his preface to my book, *The Last Secret:*

> "The comfortable after-wisdom of the historian is a luxury: he has no responsibility: he can afford to be wrong. Therefore he can only state the facts and, like the tragedian, present rather than solve moral dilemmas. . . . Now that the facts are revealed and the context has changed we shall no doubt be told that the problem was indeed simple but should have been solved in the opposite sense. We can only reply that such an idea would be unhistorical."

True, Solzhenitsyn speaks as a human being and a religious man, not as an historian. True, too, had he been able to read the documents and talk to British and American officers, he might have spoken rather less categorically about the rights and wrongs of the issue. Moved by the sufferings of his fellow-prisoners (men with true and horrible tales to tell of how they suffered under Stalin's tyranny, how they joined the German Army out of desperation and how after the war the Western Allies delivered them into Soviet hands) he could not imagine why the deed was done, let alone find any excuse for it:

> "What military or political reason can there have been for the delivery to death at Stalin's hands of these hundreds of thousands of Soviet citizens?"

LORD BETHELL's *book, "The Last Secret", narrating for the first time the full story of the Anglo-American forcible repatriation of Russian prisoners in 1945, was published last year (with a preface by H. R. Trevor-Roper) by André Deutsch in London and Basic Books in New York. It was discussed by Don Cook ("On Revealing The Last Secret") in the July issue of Encounter.*

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The decision to repatriate them by force seems to him so obviously wrong, so clearly vicious, that it is not worth debating.

SOLZHENITSYN could not know that the decision was, in fact, taken in 1944 only after weeks of thought and discussion among senior British ministers, most of whom tried sincerely to balance the moral issues. Lord Selborne, head of the famous "Special Operations Executive" (the sabotage and espionage team), wrote: "The prospect of sending back many thousands of men to die, either by execution or in Siberia, must be repellent to every Englishman." The U.S. Secretary of War, Henry Stimson, wrote, "Let the Russians catch their own Russians." Winston Churchill, too, was initially sympathetic to the Russians who had been compelled to fight on the German side, and just before he resigned in July 1945 he conceived a scheme to try to help them. He thought that they had been "tried beyond their strength." And Field-Marshal Alexander, once the operations were under way, described them as "quite out of keeping with the principles of democracy and justice as we know them. . . ."

But the doubts and protests of such men were crushed by the realities of the last year of the War. To refuse the Soviet Government's request would be, wrote Anthony Eden, "to arouse their worst suspicions." It seemed to him and his subordinates in the Foreign Office unthinkable to risk damaging the Grand Alliance by defending the lives of Soviet citizens, many of whom had fought against their own country. These people were, legal experts pointed out, none of Britain's business since they "belonged to" the Soviet Union.

There was also the fear that, if the Allies gave asylum to those Russians who asked for it, Stalin would retaliate by refusing to repatriate British and American prisoners who were falling into his hands in Eastern Europe. P. J. Grigg, Britain's Minister of War, wrote with cold frankness,

> "If the choice is between hardship to our men and death to Russians, our choice is plain."

This was the consideration urged most strongly by those who supported forcible repatriation in 1944; and Anthony Eden still sees it as justifying the policy which he pushed through Cabinet.

Others will consider the policy correct because some (though by no means all) of the victims had fought or worked willingly for the Nazi régime. Even today there are many who think that Stalin's wickedness is not to be compared with that of Hitler. Stalin was bad, many in the West will say, but Hitler was in a different and far worse moral category. By such a yardstick, what the "collaborators" did was simple treason, and their punishment was deserved. In 1944 this would have been the majority view in Britain and the United States. Thirty years later it is still widespread, although its defence defies logic.

THE PRESENT ATTITUDE of those "collaborators" who have survived would tend to confirm this unsympathetic view. Almost without exception, they are quite unrepentant for what they did, and they cannot understand why so many people in the West criticise them for joining Hitler's battalions. For instance, General Vyacheslav Naumenko (who fought for the Whites in the Civil War, then in 1943 commanded a division against the Red Army, and now lives near New York) thinks that the Western Allies should have joined his Cossacks in 1945 and marched on Moscow. He says, "The Bolsheviks have killed so many millions and deprived so many nations of their freedom. There can never be *true* peace in the world until every nation, including the Cossacks, enjoys independence and national identity."

Wilfried Strik-Strikfeldt, a Baltic German who worked closely with General Vlasov, wrote a book recently defending the Russians who changed sides.[1] They all knew that the alliance between the Kremlin and the West would never last, he writes, and the subsequent outbreak of the Cold War show how right they were: "It was our timing that was wrong. We had of course no idea of what had been agreed at Yalta." Former Vlasovites still believe that the West made a serious mistake in treating them as enemies. Instead, they feel, Britain and the United States should have signed a separate peace with Germany, allowing the war against the Soviet Union to continue. At the very least they should have kept the anti-Soviet forces trained and in reserve, ready for the "Third World War" that Stalin would inevitably provoke.

Such ideas seem somewhat bizarre to most Westerners, especially those old enough to remember the Nuremberg trials and the publicity given to Hitler's crimes. But Solzhenitsyn and his millions of fellow-victims fought against a different tribe of devils; and one can understand it when they reserve their main hatred for those they know and whose cruelty they have personally experienced. The Soviet media make use of this difference in approach. For instance, they have used it in their recent campaign to blacken Solzhenitsyn's name. Because in his recent

[1] Wilfried Strik-Strikfeldt, *Against Stalin and Hitler* (1970).

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writings he fails to condemn the Vlasovites, they call him a "Nazi". By the same primitive logic Mikhail Ozerov, London correspondent of *Tass*, has accused me of "weeping crocodile tears" and "lavishing praise on traitors who put on Nazi uniform", because I wrote my book criticising the policy of forcible repatriation. Any word of sympathy for the people who, such were their sufferings under Stalin, threw in their lot with Germany can, I suppose, be interpreted as evidence of support for Hitler and hostility towards Russia. (But this is wrong.)

ONE SENSES THAT the Western officials who took decisions about Russian prisoners in 1944–45 were walking a similar moral tightrope. But while some spoke of their "revulsion" at having to take decisions of this nature, others seem, to judge from their memoranda, to have approached the matter coldly and to have taken pains to keep morality out of the argument. One sees them constantly warning each other against "being sentimental about this" and against "deciding cases of this nature on humanitarian grounds." Some were personally disgusted by what they were being asked to approve; but they agreed that in wartime such emotional reactions were inappropriate. There was no simple pure moral answer. All they could do was to draw up a balance-sheet of good and evil, and make some decision on that calculation.

SO LONG AS WE RECOGNISE that our task is easier than theirs was, since we enjoy hindsight, we can usefully attempt to strike such a balance. Furthermore, I would suggest that it is the West's duty to do so—for after all its decision led to the forcible delivery of several million people, half of whom probably perished in Soviet labour camps. Had the decision gone the other way, many of these would have been saved. The question is: Was this harsh decision really unavoidable on "practical grounds" and in the light of wartime reality? Had we refused, would Stalin have retained or killed British and American prisoners? Would the ensuing row have "damaged the alliance", thus "prolonging the War" and condemning millions more to death?

The evidence shows that what Anthony Eden feared was lack of cooperation and tardiness in the return of prisoners, not their imprisonment or ill-treatment, and certainly not their murder. P. J. Grigg wrote of "hardship to our men", not of their possible death. An historian who has studied the papers carefully wrote to *The Times* last December:

> Eden did have fears, and they were far from groundless. But as circulated to the Foreign Office and laid before Churchill and the Cabinet, they never included the possibility that Allied prisoners would be held as hostages for the Cossacks and others.

This letter has been sent to Eden, who wrote back saying that he declined to comment.

Another "practical" fact is that the agreement on repatriation did not fulfil its function—for it did hardly anything at all to speed the return of the Allied prisoners. Averell Harriman, who took part in the Yalta negotiations, has recorded that "the Soviets did not live up to their agreement to let our teams go where our prisoners were being liberated in Poland." The Anglo-American prisoners got none of the special treatment they were promised, and they had to make their way as best they could to Odessa where ships awaited them, several of them suffering injury or death on the way. Soviet officers, on the other hand, were allowed to circulate freely in the British and American camps where their men were held. It is yet another case of a World War II agreement that was observed on the Western side, but not on the Soviet side.

Then there was the fear that the Russian prisoners would cause "inconvenience." If they did not go back to the Soviet Union, Eden minuted,

> "we may be saddled with them permanently, to our extreme embarrassment."

He writes in another note:

> "If these men do not go back to Russia, where can they go? We don't want them here."

Certainly this was a problem—the Russians would be a nuisance—they consumed British food and accommodation—they often got into trouble of one sort or another. But it was hardly a problem that defied administrative solution or that morally justified their wholesale deportation to Soviet labour camps. The "nuisance" element was a reason, but hardly a sufficient one.

"GOOD RELATIONS" with the Soviet Union were a matter of life-and-death to the Allies during the War and a matter of great importance after it ended. The question is: Did our surrender to Soviet demands on such matters as Forcible Repatriation help or hinder these relations? It is here that the West made its greatest mistakes, for it appears that by the time of the Yalta Conference many American and British decision-makers had convinced themselves that Stalin was "a man of his word" and that, provided that he was treated like a gentleman, he would behave as a gentleman. The prevailing Western approach was that the best way of making the Soviet Government behave well was simply to give in to their demands and show inexhaustible good will, in the hope that they would.

There were, of course, some cynics. Churchill,

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for instance, treated Stalin more like a bandit from what English travel writers used to call "Savage Europe." He held no illusions about the man's wickedness but he was convinced that the Grand Alliance was essential to the defeat of Nazi Germany. But most of the others appear to have let themselves be thoroughly deceived. There was Anthony Eden, for instance, who told Harold Nicolson that "Stalin has never broken his word once given. . . ." There was Alexander Cadogan, head of the Foreign Office, who wrote in his diary after Yalta, "I have never known the Russians so easy and accommodating. . . ." (Did he *really* think that they had been accommodating about Poland?) And there was Edward Bridges, Secretary to the British Cabinet, who wrote of

> the obvious sincerity of their [the Soviet Union's] desire to do us well and their wish to be in good relations with us and to cooperate with us after the war.

How is it that such well-informed men were so deluded? In 1943, for instance, Eden and his subordinates had been universally advised that it was the Soviet secret police, not the Germans, who were responsible for the murder of thousands of Polish officers at Katyn. "The presumption of guilt rests very strongly with the Soviet Government", Frank Roberts reported. "On the evidence we have it is very difficult to escape from the presumption of Russian guilt", Cadogan recorded. Nevertheless, Eden went to the House of Commons and gave members the clear impression that the crime was Nazi work. He has never taken back what he said then, and his words presumably remain the official British verdict.

Can one blame Eden for doing what he did at the time? Politicians sometimes have to tell lies, especially in wartime. How is it though, that he did not learn the lesson? Why did he not, in his later dealings with the Soviet leaders, act on the basis of the fact (demonstrated to him by Katyn and other well-reported instances) that these were ruthless men quite capable of mass murder? As Foreign Secretary he used all means to preserve the Grand Alliance, and rightly, for the War effort was paramount. Where he went wrong was in allowing this necessity to eclipse certain realities, to evict disagreeable facts from his mind. The belief of certain Western leaders in Stalin's honesty and good intentions (Cordell Hull thought he would make a fine U.S. Senator!) was not just a mistake, it was also an avoidable mistake, for it was contradicted by so many alarming reports that were available to them.

Sadly, neither Eden nor any of his subordinates of the time will agree to be interviewed and to discuss the decision they urged. I am afraid their inner thoughts, whatever they were, remain closed, probably for ever. Of the Cabinet Ministers who made the decision in September 1944 all are dead except Anthony Eden, now Lord Avon. The relevant Minute states merely that Eden's recommendation was adopted "after a short discussion." Recently, I have heard, Eden asked the Foreign Office to give him copies of all documents on Forcible Repatriation, presumably because of the forthcoming book on the subject and the publicity that was likely to attend it. These papers were duly dug out, copied, and sent to him in 1974. He has thus been able to study and refresh his mind on a matter which in all his many previous books is not mentioned at all. But he still will not speak. Perhaps one day he will change his mind.

In contrast, British soldiers have been quite willing to talk about the part they played in the distasteful business. It is clear that most of them resented having to use force against unarmed prisoners, some of them women and children, in operations that were obviously politically inspired and militarily pointless. Many of them have said to me that they found the whole thing unprofessional and unsoldierly. It was one thing for the Foreign Office men to send orders from London: "I am well aware of the complexity of the problem, but the job must be tackled. . . . I think it is most important to get rid of these people as soon as possible. . . . They seem to us to deserve no sympathy. . . ." It was another thing for British and American soldiers actually to employ the force and violence necessary to get the terrified Russians into the trucks heading eastwards to death.

"It was the only time I ever saw an Argyll & Sutherland Highlander in tears," says Kenneth Tyson, who was "padre" of the battalion that carried out some of the most difficult operations. Tom Dennis, another officer involved, has confessed:

> "When I came home it haunted me really. I used to have nightmares for a very long time afterwards. I would wake up in the night having been mixed up in this incident again in my dreams, and I was really sickened almost to the point of a nervous breakdown at one stage."

John Pinching, the battalion medical officer, remembers that some of his men were "in great distress" as they fought to load the Russian women and children. It was unprecedented, in his experience—such a reaction from fighting men who had been through many bloody battles. Was this a factor that the decision-makers in London had taken into account at all? They expected their men in the field to grumble a bit, but surely not to be distressed to tears. The whole situation was unique not so much for the degree

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of its violence, but for the special emotional and moral problems it posed.

The Cossacks surrendered to the British and placed themselves under their protection. For nearly a month the two armies lived amicably together. Then, quite suddenly and for no reason that the ordinary British soldier could appreciate, the order came that they were to be treated as dangerous enemies and delivered to what was, from their point of view, a fate worse than death. British soldiers were confused and disorientated by what happened, by an order that seemed to fall outside their wartime duties and to have little in common with what they had been fighting about. But they obeyed the order.

SO MORE QUESTIONS ARISE. Why did they obey, and should they have obeyed? For Cossacks such as General Naumenko—who has edited a book on the affair called *The Great Betrayal* in which Churchill is described as nothing less than a war criminal—the answer is simple and the verdict harsh. The excuse that "orders are orders" only partly satisfies them, and rightly, for the judges at Nuremberg rejected this defence and sentenced men to death for committing criminally violent acts under the instructions of their superiors.

Nevertheless, this was the explanation offered by most of the soldiers involved; that they were only carrying out orders. "I would have liked to save more people. But I couldn't. My orders were so clear", said Brigadier Firebrace, whose disagreeable job it was to interview Russian prisoners, in the company of Red Army officers, and decide which of them were due for repatria-

European Notebook:

Paris

ON THE ONE HAND, *we can tell which is right and which is left; on the other hand, the troubles begin. Nowadays in Portugal, France, and Italy, the sense of political direction is beginning to become strangely blurred. In Portugal, where none of the new parliamentarians want to sit anywhere but on the left of the elected chamber, the Socialist Soares is locked in a struggle with Communist-supported Army officers. But in France the two great parties of the left are associated in a "common front", and their candidate François Mitterrand was almost elected President. Yet even if their general chances have improved—according to the pollsters—a Left Government seems increasingly unlikely, for if a majority of Frenchmen might have confidence in Messrs Mitterrand and Marchais, they do not appear to have any confidence in each other.*

Mitterrand is accused by Georges Marchais of seeking new allies "on the right", but in Italy it is the Communist Party who is offering the Christian Democrats a "Great Coalition." So, for those who can tell their left hand from their right, we have barricades in the middle in Portugal, an inflexible line between Government and a split Opposition in France, and in Italy an "apertura" *wide open to the centre. Have these differences something to do with the individual Latin complexities of each of these volatile Mediterranean political cultures? Soares was forced to break with "revolutionary" comrades under heavy pressure; Mitterrand still strains to maintain a fiction of unity and agreement; and the Italian socialist Martino faces increasing losses in political support as the Italian Communists effectively present themselves as the very best of social democrats. . . .*

Unlike Cunhal who is an old Portuguese Stalinist with nothing but contempt for bourgeois-democracy and its ways, Marchais recognises (or at least says he does) the importance of a pluralistic democracy—and then goes on to praise his Comrade in Lisbon. Not so Enrico Berlinguer who has openly criticised the intolerance of the Cunhal line, which is proud of being "armed to the teeth" and whose toughness is throwing a shadow over a Communism *all'italiana* with all its hard-working Mayors and local councilmen. To be sure, there are Italian militants (in the metal unions, for example) who would much prefer a Cunhal to a Berlinguer. One would suspect that the "liberalism" of the Italian Left is more popular at the top than at the bottom of the movement.

Why is it that the French Communists appear so stiff and inflexible and the Italian comrades so tactically agile? One theory has it that in the moment that the French Communists abandon their "hardness" then the whole movement in a modernising France dissolves into reformist and meliorist groups. In more backward Italy, however, there is a political space for reform-minded revolutionaries. Be that as it may, one still has to puzzle out why, then, does the leader of the Communists in Spain, Carrillo, seem so "democratic" and Portugal's Cunhal so totalitarian? At the risk of making a Cult of Personality in the West, perhaps the character of the various individuals concerned plays something of a role.

According to Berlinguer, "Italy is not Portugal." And Marchais also insists that "France is not Portugal." There are even voices in Lisbon that are heard to be claiming that "Portugal is not Angola." In Luanda the warring factions on the Left are accusing each other of thinking that Angola is Russia or, alternatively, China.

We need to make new maps for this new political geography. Our old ideological Mercator projections whereon we could make out East and West and Left and Right is now simply too flat.

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tion. "Certainly not!" was the sharp answer of General Musson when I asked him if he had ever contemplated disobedience. As Professor Trevor-Roper has remarked:

> "We have heard all these arguments from German soldiers. Perhaps it is salutary to hear them also from our own countrymen. It brings the dilemma nearer home."

Indeed, after the moral writhings that attended and followed Nuremberg, "orders-are-orders" has become to many a mere discredited cliché, and not a moral dilemma at all. For instance, last October Auberon Waugh attacked in *The New Statesman* a man who, in 1944, was a 29-year-old Foreign Office desk-officer dealing with forcible repatriation and who now is Permanent Under-Secretary, Sir Thomas Brimelow. "Like everyone else involved, he was only obeying orders," wrote Waugh—a damning sentence indeed in today's conscience-stricken climate. But does he really think that Brimelow should have deserted his desk in Whitehall in 1944? He did not influence the formation of the policy. He merely helped to implement it. As a junior officer he could not know the full facts, the arguments that had persuaded the Cabinet. On the other hand, he had spent some years in Moscow, and knew at first hand what Stalinism meant. Perhaps he should have made the great protest and resigned. But if he had, it would not have changed anything: his resignation would have caused no outcry, and wartime necessity would have muzzled the press and Parliament. Perhaps he should have made the gesture, if only for the benefit of his immortal soul, so as not to "sin."

What's Left

DANTE MIGHT HAVE **suggested abandoning all hope if one tried, as an outsider, to enter into the internal political problems of Italy nowadays. I have immersed myself in the Italian press—the *Corriere della Sera* of Milan, the *Stampa* of Turin, the *Messaggero* of Rome—and was puzzled to distraction. Why, then, did Signor Fanfani resign as leader of the great centre party, and what did it all mean? The more one read, the less one understood. I had to make for myself a little dictionary which could translate some of the confusion into meaning. Here are a few excerpts from the lexicon, just to discourage the others.**

1. Trasformismo. *I take it that this derives from the old politics of the pre-Fascist Italian statesman Giolitti, and it referred to his eagerness to absorb all the new forces on the scene, whatever their programme or ideology, and make new arrangements. Today it suggests the hope of Stability through Change* "trasformazione." *Particularly useful in trying to make out the old and new opinions of re-arranged Italian newspapers.*

2. Ridimensionnamento. *Another of the polysyllabic concepts without which Italian politics cannot survive. It underlines the shrinking of a group's political power and the frank recognition thereof. The process of "re-dimensioning" never refers to the expansion of power and influence, only to its diminution.*

3. Strumentalizzazione. *Always employed when an event of the day is used against an opposing political party, i.e. a pro-fascist bombing as an argument for the Left, the terrorism of the ultra-Leftists as an argument for the Right. Always refers to what the others are up to, never what you are doing, and thus polemically indispensable in the current debate.*

4. Egemonizzazione. *The way in which the major parties deal with the smaller allies in order to maintain their hegemony.*

5. Caotizzanione. *Making a chaos of the remaining orderly areas of Italian public administration—accidentally, or on purpose.*

6. Equilibri avanzati. *A tricky operation to readjust the political equilibrium to the Left, going beyond the old "apertura" approach which Fanfani once advocated and now has rejected (see* "trasformismo"*).*

7. Parallelismi convergenti. *Here Euclid may well be turning in his grave, but the converging parallel lines indicate that groups can work together towards a common end without becoming allies. Probably a curious Romanesque conception of Einstein's relativity.*

8. Sottogoverno. *A suggestive word to underline the building up of power positions outside the usual rules of the game, but with the connivance of the powers that be. Its effect appears to be the dissolution of the Republic into a congeries of political and economic principalities. Burckhardt might have sensed here a return to Machiavelli's Renaissance.*

9. Populismo. *Good catch-all for unpopular but very active minorities who speak in the name of the whole people to justify their power-struggle (via intimidation, and worse) for key positions in the trade-unions, the city councils, etc. Some hold that Fascism itself was a* "populismo" *and led to the Duce's- (and Caudillo-) type dictatorship. Others claim that today* "populismo" *is deeply anti-fascist. Nobody lets on exactly where it will lead this time.*

But then Berlinguer is not Mussolini. Italy is not Spain. Nor is the European political vocabulary what it used to be.

François Bondy

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THERE ARE, I think, several reasons why it is wildly inappropriate to compare men like Brimelow with the Nuremberg defendants. Many seem to have forgotten the speed of events, the urgency of those Wartime days. Now we have the leisure to reflect upon our moral duties, but at the time things happened too quickly for that. In such a climate no man, especially a young man, would easily contemplate civil (indeed quasi-military) disobedience. Resignation on a matter of principle was too much like desertion for comfort, even in the comparative safety of Whitehall, while in the field obedience to orders had become an instinct. What soldier could be counted upon to grasp, within a matter of days, complicated moral issues so firmly as to say no to his superior officers, men he had fought and suffered with over many a mile and in many a strange land?

This is the real excuse for the British soldiers who, Solzhenitsyn feels, mortally sinned in the Drau Valley in 1945. The Nazi war criminals committed acts of human cruelty again and again, often over a period of years. They *did* have time to reflect on what they were doing and to consider its implications for good and evil. The record shows that German soldiers often could, if their consciences pricked them, obtain transfers to posts where they waged war against the organised enemy, not against helpless hapless innocents.

The violent and cruel operations carried out by the British and American soldiers lasted only a few days. But it took them no longer than this to realise that something was indeed badly wrong, that they were being asked to use methods which, as they had been instructed, were the peculiar inhumane hallmark of their Nazi enemies. And once they realised this, they protested. For instance, Alec Malcolm, after one day of his battle against unarmed Cossack women and children, said to his superior officer, Brigadier Musson: "I don't know what's going to happen tomorrow, but I'm not going to do this again." There were the soldiers serving with Major-General H. E. N. Bredin who did not hestitate long before telling their superiors that they could be "counted out" of any more operations; they did this so firmly that they were replaced by recruits from another unit. There were General Murray and Lieutenant John Grieg, who clearly "bent" their orders; they took the liberty of telling the Cossacks they were guarding what was roughly in store for them; the result was that thousands took to the hills and survived. Had the operations lasted longer than a few days, there would certainly have been mass disobedience in the British ranks. The evidence shows that they recognised the "sin" when they saw it and soon reacted against it.

The British and American soldiers were the ones who had the least to do with the decision-making, and it was they who protested the most. It is they, too, who feel the greatest regret and concern for what happened, even if their moral responsibility for the crime—for a crime, on balance, I think it was, in spite of all the mitigating circumstances—is less than that of the politicians and diplomats who actually influenced the final decision. The greatest responsibility belongs to Anthony Eden, who pushed his plan for forcible repatriation through the British Cabinet; to the Churchill Cabinet itself which collectively approved the plan; and to the Roosevelt/Truman U.S. American Cabinet which subsequently went along with it.

BUT WHAT OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE who, Solzhenitsyn says, are still in a state of sin? How can they absolve themselves? Presumably by expressing regret, through their elected leaders, for what happened and by paying compensation to the handful, a few dozen men and women who, though not Soviet citizens, were forcibly delivered, survived ten years in the labour camps, and were released to the West in 1955. It would be a token act, but one which would remove Britain's burden of guilt, by religious standards at least.

It is also one which, unfortunately, is not likely to happen. In March 1975 the Foreign Office was asked for assistance by a BBC director who was making a documentary film on the subject. It was a request to be allowed to take "standard shots" inside the main building, a request which is granted without formality several times a year to film companies, both British and foreign. After some delay the request was referred to the Foreign Secretary personally, and he refused. His reason? He was afraid that a film on such a matter "might damage Anglo-Soviet relations."

He wrote to me, "I cannot agree with you that the matter is one of principle."

So to this extent Solzhenitsyn is right. Individual British soldiers are deeply shocked by what they were forced to do in 1945 and have shown "repentance." By the strict religious standard which Solzhenitsyn applies to such moral questions, these people may probably now be absolved. But the two Foreign Secretaries, Anthony Eden and James Callaghan, feel no need to apologise or even to discuss the matter. Only they, as leaders, are in a position to purge the people's responsibility or "sin"; and this they are not yet ready to do.

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LETTERS

Love in a Cold Climate

DON COOK'S ARTICLE [ENCOUNTER, July] and Nicholas Bethell's book, *The Last Secret*, even more so. For 30 years now disclosures have pointed to the regrettable willingness of Western governments to make "deals", often at the cost of human freedom and life. Call it Allied cooperation, or co-existence, or nowadays *détente*—how much is thereby gained for freedom and democracy? Tough régimes profit to the full, and have they ever made any concessions of real significance?

For those who have faith in *détente* and believe that the "Iron Curtain" is a thing of the past, I would like to tell a fable, unfortunately my own. In my case at least the so-called Cold War's so-called Iron Curtain is very much a thing of the present. In fact it goes right through the middle of our conjugal bed, my wife being American and I being Rumanian. We were married here, and now live here. I am a novelist and have decided to live in the West and to write in English, which has always been my second language. Consequently, we asked for permission to live abroad for myself, and for confirmation of our marriage—since under Rumanian law I am not free to marry a foreigner, unless with special permission. This permission is granted (very rarely) by the State Council of Rumania, headed by the President of the Republic. We married without asking for it. I had the hope that the *fait accompli* would persuade the Rumanian Government to accept that love knows no fixed *de jure* frontiers, not even with America.

Well, a few days ago—on the eve of the Helsinki Conference—we learned through a letter from the Rumanian Embassy that neither living abroad nor marriage are allowed. Are, then, Rumanians nothing but the property of the Rumanian state? Socialism is supposed to nationalise the means of production—but of reproduction? My vital and intimate choices have no value for the Rumanian authorities. We could not even live in the same house in Rumania. Under Rumanian law, foreigners cannot stay with Rumanians, unless they are "first-degree relatives"; and the State Council of Rumania, headed by the President of the Republic, has evidently decreed that my wife and I are not.

All this goes on, as I say, during the Helsinki love feast, a "summit" which promises more freedom of travel, easier marriage formalities between foreigners, reuniting of families, and other similar elementary human rights. President Gerald Ford of the USA visits President Ceausescu of Rumania—*détente* obviously works between them. But alas, it does not yet work between my wife and myself. I have chosen to live abroad and write in another language. Shouldn't minds, like bodies, be allowed to move freely and unfettered? To read in Cook and in Bethell about forced repatriations makes me shudder. What, after all, was Eden's and Stalin's relationship at the end of the War but a moment of high *détente*? As an expatriate intellectual from Eastern Europe, one can only say that there are human reasons that political reason knows nothing about.

PETRU POPESCU

London

"Mosley Rehabilitated"

VERNON BOGDANOR'S analysis of Robert Skidelsky's *Oswald Mosley* in your June issue is the most perceptive of the many that I have read. No one else has shown so clearly how Skidelsky has misled himself both as to the character of the man he is writing about and the events in which he was involved. But even Bogdanor has missed one very important clue as to the degree of self-deception the biographer has inflicted upon himself. In examining Mosley's return to post-War politics he dismisses in just a few pages the efforts made by Mosley to exploit once again the political possibilities of public anti-Semitism. His Union movement deliberately mounted a series of provocative marches and meetings in North East London through Jewish districts trying to exploit the tense feelings of the expiring days of the British mandate in Palestine.

This period is probably the most accessible for references of any other covered in the book, and it is the least documented in either the text or notes. Mosley and his followers shortly afterwards moved to a softer target, the coloured immigrants; and Mosley's Europeanism was grafted on as a new ideological conception just as his pre-War fascism was political opportunism of another kind. Mosley deserves only one prize and that is as the political cynic of the twentieth century who survived.

JACK BARNETT

London

Law & Morality

MR LIONEL BLOCH [Letters, September] has once again missed the point. He insists on translating my argument into a confrontation between a "*laissez-faire* régime" and an "interventionist government", and then taxes me with the implications not of my argument but of his translation. I regard a "non-interventionist government" as a self-contradiction because whenever a government acts, it necessarily intervenes somehow in the lives of the governed. As to "laissez-faire régime", Adam Smith who is thought of as the father of that idea strongly advocated that government "intervene" in many ways. The supposition that Smith or his doctrine of *laissez-faire* opposed all action by government is an absurdity invented by people who fail to understand or wish to discredit it. But none of this is relevant to my essay [ENCOUNTER, November 1974].

The distinction that I used there between government as a manager of an enterprise and as a ruler of a civil association—a distinction made by Michael Oakeshott in *On Human Conduct* (1975)—differentiates governments by *the purposes for which and the manners in which they intervene*. I used the distinction to clarify the relation between law and morality. I

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argued that though in a civil association the laws govern rather than direct private decisions, the concept of law cannot be divorced from the concept of morality; and that those who seek to divorce law from morality wrongly equate the inclusion of moral considerations in the law with turning the law into the rules of an enterprise.

This implies, among other things, that morality is not a monopoly of welfare states. If Mr Bloch takes this to mean that my argument defends an ideal of non-interventionist government, generalises about current politics, endorses inflation, terrorism, and tyranny, I can only say that we do not speak the same language.

SHIRLEY ROBIN LETWIN

London

Noam Chomsky's Reply

With a final comment by JOHN R. SILBER

IN ENCOUNTER (January 1975) M. V. Adams asserts that W. W. Rostow was not reappointed to MIT four years after his resignation because "the MIT administration felt itself threatened by the protest movement inspired by Noam Chomsky and others." He claims that "Institute officials" so acknowledged "in private." If facts are relevant, here are a few.

The protest movement at MIT was inspired by the war and initiated by students, who—amazing though this may be to some—were capable of recognising aggression and massacre without instruction. Some faculty were drawn in. I was too, though peripherally.

When the Rostow incident took place, radical students and faculty—who regarded Rostow, correctly, as a war criminal—met and decided to protest if extra-academic considerations stood in the way of his reappointment. So far as we could determine, this was not the case. The decision was made by colleagues in economics and political science. In the 8 years since Rostow had left MIT departmental structures had changed and new appointments had been made. Despite the weighty testimony that Adams adduces (James Reston), there is no reason to believe that Rostow would even have been considered had it not been for his earlier association with MIT. Conceivably, Adams has evidence to back his charges, but I am not holding my breath in anticipation.

I have commented before on falsehoods and misrepresentations in this journal (December, 1969; February, 1970). In these letters, I responded, *inter alia,* to two charges raised against my book *American Power and the New Mandarins* (*APNM*). The same two charges reappear in an article by John Silber (August 1974), with no reference to the earlier discussion. I did not respond once again, thinking this to be superfluous. A letter in the January 1975 issue indicates that a reader took Silber seriously. Perhaps, then, a comment is in order, extending my earlier comments to deal with some new deceptions.

SILBER QUOTES an article of mine in *Ethics* in which I wrote that "three times in a generation, American technology has laid waste a helpless Asian country. . . . The systematic destruction of a virtually defenceless Japan was carried out with a sense of moral rectitude that was then, and remains today, unchallenged" (he omits my reference to Stimson's qualms at the time); and "In Korea the process was repeated. . . ." The third case is, of course, Indochina. These statements are offered as an example of "poisoning the wells of academe." The reason is that in this "simplistic rendering of history" I did not—Silber claims—differentiate the several cases. He cites the 1937 bombing of Nanking and other incidents of the Pacific war to illustrate what I allegedly ignored, then asking rhetorically whether Japan is "correctly described as a 'defenceless Asian country'."

The paper that Silber cites begins with a note stating that it is the text of a talk not intended for publication, and therefore incorporates material from *APNM*, then in press, which Silber cites elsewhere. The quoted comment appears in the introduction to *APNM*, with minor changes in wording. Why did Silber refer to a side remark in a journal article devoted to quite a different topic, while ignoring the same remarks in a book, where they set forth a central theme? The reason is simple. In *APNM* there is a 60-page chapter devoted to the backgrounds of the Pacific war, where I discuss "the brutality of the Japanese attack on China", the bombing of Nanking and "the feeling of horror at the events themselves and of contempt for those who had perpetrated them", the vicious Japanese counter-insurgency operations in Manchuria, and so on. Silber's major point—that "Chomsky never asks whether America's three Asian involvements are comparable; he simply assumes that they are"—is a brazen lie.

Putting Silber's deceit to the side, let us consider his rhetorical question. Is it correct to say that American technology destroyed a virtually defenceless Japan ("in 1945", as explicitly noted in *APNM*, where these remarks appear)? Obviously, the statement is correct; thus even without the lengthy analysis that Silber pretends does not exist, the statement would hardly be an example of "rewrit[ing] history" and "pollut[ing] the well of the market-place." Rather, this characterisation holds of Silber's grossly false statement that only by a "stretch of logic and historical knowledge" can we conclude that "the United States engaged in 'the systematic destruction of a virtually defenceless Japan'."

Note the absurdity of Silber's argument, quite apart from the misrepresentation. It rests on the fact that Japan committed aggression and barbaric acts in 1937 and thereafter (in fact, long before, as I document). But plainly from this truth one cannot conclude

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that the US did not lay waste a virtually helpless Japan in 1945, another truth.

SILBER SEEMS TO BE ARGUING that the terror bombing of defenceless Japanese cities in 1945 is somehow justified by Japanese aggression and brutality. If there were a shred of rationality to his argument, one could apply it to American aggression in Indochina, concluding that it would be quite proper to bomb defenceless American cities today. Silber of course is not guilty of any such consistency. On the contrary, he is outraged by student disruptions in protest against the war, though these fell somewhat short of the firebombings of Tokyo in March in which 90,000 people were killed, or two atom bombs, or the subsequent thousand plane raid launched as a "finale", in the words of the Air Force history (*cf. APNM*; according to a Japanese source cited there, the planes also dropped leaflets announcing Japan's surrender). Is the disparity in judgment a reflection of America's rectitude as contrasted with Japanese villainy? Hardly so, as a comparison of Japanese and American aggression shows; *cf.* the chapter that Silber pretends does not exist.

Silber's attitudes, as expressed in these passages, give a revealing insight into the mind of the apologist for imperial violence. Japan's aggression justified the terror tactics of 1945. Disruptive protests against the US war in Indochina are an intolerable outrage. But when, say, US planes destroy the peaceful civilian society of Northern Laos, hundreds of miles from any zone of combat, one hears no whisper of protest from John Silber.

Silber's only further argument is that it was thought at the time that invasion would cost the US a million casualties. This allegedly justifies the atom bombing. There is no place in Silber's world-view for the questions that have been seriously discussed in the years since: Was it right or necessary to invade Japan? Could not the final surrender terms have been presented earlier—a particularly significant question, now that we know that a cable intercepted in July indicated that Japan might well accept these terms? and so on. Silber's cops-and-robbers version of history might be able to pass at an American Legion convention. It is most remarkable in an article devoted to charges (false, as just noted) concerning a "simplistic rendering of history."

Similarly, my reference to Korea is precisely accurate. Accepting for the sake of argument Silber's version of the facts, it still remains a true and important fact that a defenceless North Korea was laid waste by American technology with a sense of rectitude that was then virtually unchallenged. One need only open the official military history, with its vivid description of the bombing of dams ("Floodwaters poured forth and left a trail of havoc. . . . Buildings, crops, and irrigation canals were all swept away in the devastating torrent"; comparable crimes brought the death penalty at Nuremberg), etc.

SILBER'S SECOND EXAMPLE has to do with an error that appeared in *APNM*. The facts, as reported in my earlier letters, are as follows. I mistakenly attributed to Truman a paraphrase of some of his remarks, garbling the wording slightly in addition. Since I gave a precise page reference to the source, the error was quickly found by a reviewer and corrected at once in the second printing (1969) and foreign editions, a fact that Silber chooses not to mention. In publications that Silber cites, I noted that the error was "careless and inexcusable", explained the correction, and went on to demonstrate, in a detailed analysis, that the paraphrases were accurate and perceptive.

Lamentable though this error may be, it hardly demonstrates the "poisoning [of] the wells of academe." Therefore, Silber resorts to some embellishments. He intimates that I held that the paraphrase and the original "are so patently and precisely equivalent that no man of sense would care whether he had read the original or the paraphrase", and refers to my "cavalier insistence that it makes no difference." All of this is pure fabrication. I stated—and demonstrated—that the paraphrases were perceptive and accurate, while noting that this in no way justifies my "careless and inexcusable" error. What I actually wrote, eliminating Silber's inventions, is by no means "sharply at odds" with my statement that the error was "careless and inexcusable", as he claims; rather, it was entirely consistent with my latter statement, as well as correct. Silber states that "the question is not whether these passages are accurately paraphrased . . . ", but had he kept to the facts, without embellishment, he would have been forced to conclude that this is exactly "the question", since I never asserted more than this. The "carelessness about evidence which characterises the negligent academic well-poisoner" is his alone, once again.

SILBER ALSO REFERS to an article in which I discussed Herrnstein on IQ, alleging that my argument there constitutes "yet another disruption of the marketplace." He urges that Herrnstein should be opposed by "serious men", not "rabble-rousers." He carefully suppresses the fact that the article he cites contains a detailed analysis and refutation of Herrnstein's argument, extended elsewhere (*For Reasons of State*, 1973). He further misrepresents the single statement to which he refers. I noted that the scientist, like anyone else, is responsible for the foreseeable consequences of his acts. If opening up certain questions to inquiry has malicious social consequences (Silber does not deny that it does, in this case; fortunately, because it is true), then this act must be justified on the basis of factors that outweigh the evil consequences. These are truisms, which scientists often consider in their work. I mentioned some of the arguments that might be offered to justify the work, showing that they have no force. Silber's sole response is that "the refinement of social science methodology might be one of the scientific gains of discussing these issues." The remark gives some insight into Silber's moral calculus, but nothing more than this. He pretends that he is defending free inquiry, but that issue did not even arise in the discussion. Either Silber is completely muddled about this specific issue, or, once again, he has chosen to misrepresent the matter seriously, subsequent to his pretence that I did not deal with the other aspects of the issue.

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The topic that Adams and Silber address is an important one. Since World War II, there has indeed been a dangerous politicisation of American universities, as resources and scholarship were devoted to serving the demands of the state, including aggression and imperial violence. These unhappy events were accompanied by a serious "pollution of the well of the market place" of scholarship in domains that relate to American power and its exercise, a fact that has been documented elsewhere. At the same time there have been many fully documented cases of purging of left-wing faculty members, often over the heads of faculty and administration. There is as yet no comprehensive review of all of this. Perhaps, some day, a journal that really is devoted to intellectual freedom will take up the matter.

NOAM CHOMSKY

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass.

Silber's Reply to Chomsky

PROFESSOR CHOMSKY'S LETTER is shot through with distortion and evasion, but what I find most disturbing about it is its lack of civility. There was a time when controversialists could disagree with each other without descending into vulgar abuse, but for Professor Chomsky that time seems to be well past.

1. Lacking any independent knowledge for intervening in his quarrel with Mr M. V. Adams about the Walt Rostow appointment, I can only point out that, according to Professor Chomsky, the status of "war criminal" need not be determined by a court, even by so imperfect a one as the Nuremberg Tribunal. A small group of faculty and students, acting as the academic equivalent of a lynch mob, is sufficient to bring in the verdict.

2. The short answer to Professor Chomsky's series of charges about my treatment of his paper in *Ethics* is that I have quoted it accurately, and that it does not matter what he may have written elsewhere on the same topic. It does not matter whether he originally intended the *Ethics* piece for publication; for by publishing it he intended its publication, and assumed all the responsibilities inherent in the act. He cannot now evade them by pointing out that elsewhere he published a slightly less defective version of the same paragraph.

But to leave the matter there would suggest that the chapter in *APNM* cited by Professor Chomsky contains evidence that he does in fact distinguish among the three American involvements in Asia, and that I was led by my awareness of this to cite his statement from an obscure source—the well-known and long-established *Ethics*—so as to deceive my readers.

Professor Chomsky omits to say that my experience with his *Ethics* piece goes back well before its publication. He delivered it in a major session of the American Philosophical Association attended by over 2,000 philosophers at which I was an official commentator. In my response I made the criticisms I have later repeated in *Ethics*. If he took these into consideration, there is no sign of it in the printed version. In any event, my connection with his essay in *Ethics* is intimate and of long standing: I did not search the hinterlands for a dead horse that I might flog.

3. BUT NOTHING AT ALL can be inferred from the chapter in *APNM* about what Professor Chomsky thinks about the comparability of America's three Asian involvements, for he limits himself to a discussion of the backgrounds of World War II. Further, although he spends a good deal of that chapter trying to demonstrate (with considerable success) parallels between Japanese and American involvements on the Asian mainland, part of his burden is that Pearl Harbour was provoked by American policy toward Japan. This is not a very original position: but it does nothing to advance his claim that he sees substantial differences between Viet Nam and the Pacific war. One would not guess, by the way, that the "feeling of horror at the events themselves and of contempt for those who had perpetrated them" alluded to by Professor Chomsky, is not his own feeling but rather what he attributes to world opinion. He himself, in an extraordinary embrace of the mass guilt theory, says that no American citizen can so much as *describe* the Japanese bombing of Nanking without being a hypocrite.

4. His demonstration of our national "sense of rectitude" in the Korean war is almost weird. The quotation itself is simple narrative, displaying neither rectitude nor guilt. In any event, I do not understand how the attitude of an historian describing an event can tell us much about the attitude of the actors in it. After citing this passage, Professor Chomsky's syntax collapses under the weight of his indignation; but he seems to be alleging that someone was sentenced to death by the Nuremberg Tribunal for having bombed dams. Like so much of the history by which Professor Chomsky constructs his political journalism, this is history that isn't so.

He is more precise about this elsewhere, in the introduction to *APNM*, in which he says "As a historical reference point, recall that German High Commissioner Seyss-Inquart was condemned to death at Nuremberg for opening dikes in Holland at the time of the Allied invasion." This statement is followed by a superscript; but the note does not, as one might expect, cite the appropriate document from the records of the Tribunal.

What one finds is a reference to an article by David Dellinger in which Gabriel Kolko is quoted as detailing Seyss-Inquart's opening of the dikes and as remarking that this "crime was considered to be one of the most monstrous of the Second World War, and prominent among the charges against him at Nuremberg." Kolko does not say by whom considered; but whoever they are, they are undiscriminating if they in fact rank this with Auschwitz, or the bombing of Rotterdam, or indeed even with the many other crimes charged against Seyss-Inquart. As his authority Kolko cites p. 117 of the Department of State's *Germany, 1947–49*. But if one turns to that page, one discovers only a statistical abstract of the twelve Nuremberg cases. There is no mention whatever of Seyss-Inquart. It appears that Professor Chomsky is not over-careful about the wells he himself drinks from. Had he read Kolko (who does not, after all, really say that Seyss-Inquart was *convicted* on the dike

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count) more carefully, or had he gone to the documents of the Tribunal, he would have avoided the error. That is why historians depend upon primary documents rather than interpretative reports. If Professor Chomsky is going to go on trying to write history, he needs to understand this.

The crimes of Arthur Seyss-Inquart were many and horrible, and merited a supreme penalty. But as it happens, the judgment at Nuremberg did not even mention his opening of the dikes in the Netherlands. My disagreement with Professor Chomsky is not as to the character of Seyss-Inquart but rather as to the facts of history. It will not do for Chomsky to fabricate a conviction at Nuremberg and then to use it as evidence that "comparable" activities in Korea constituted war crimes and through a curious logical extension convict Rostow as a war criminal.

Although Professor Kolko (unlike Professor Chomsky) concedes that the North Korean dams were bombed so as to end the war sooner, neither he nor Professor Chomsky seems to realise that Seyss-Inquart's opening of the Dutch dikes was gratuitous violence against the civilian population without military purpose. There can never be a clear understanding of history when practitioners such as these blur distinctions so casually.

5. As to the Truman "quotations", Professor Chomsky's position always has been that because his

Words, Words, Words (I)

THERE IS A DUTCH *proverb which says: "Proverbs are the daughters of daily experience." In that case daily experience must vary considerably from day to day, since those daughters seem to spring from very different fathers. Quite often one proverb is blankly contradicted by another. "Look before you leap"—yes, but what about "He who hesitates is lost"? "God help the poor, for the rich can help themselves"—yes, but also: "God help the rich, the poor can beg." "A good tale is none the worse for being twice told" is barely reconcilable with "A tale twice told is cabbage twice sold." Two of the most quoted cancel themselves out: "Many hands make light work" and "Too many cooks spoil the broth." Then, as we know, "Absence makes the heart grow fonder"—but before you stake your love life or professional career on that sage counsel remember this: "Out of sight, out of mind."*

Incidentally, those who still treasure the human touch and distrust the mechanical will be glad to hear that when a highly sophisticated computer was set to translating English idioms into foreign tongues, "Out of sight, out of mind" re-emerged in Japanese as "Invisible, insane."

For a proverb to survive, for it to become a proverb, it needs to embody a considerable measure of proven truth, and the explanation of this mutual contradictoriness must lie in that wise remark of Dr Johnson's (in "Rasselas") about inconsistencies: "Inconsistencies cannot both be right, but, imputed to man, they may both be true."

THEN THERE IS THE CRYPTIC CLASS **of proverbs, those which leave us baffled and uneasy, with the feeling that something sinister is being hinted at. For instance: "An egg will be in three bellies in twenty-four hours"; that sounds obscurely frightening, and so does "Everything hath an end, and a pudding hath two." The saying that goes: "He that hath a head of wax must not walk in the sun" causes us to feel our own heads in trepidation. The one that tells us "A dog's nose and a maid's knees are always cold" gives us to think seriously about its intention; and so does "You should never [in another version: only] rub your eyes with your elbows" —there's something of the Zen *koan* in that one. "A lisping lass is good to kiss": that may be true on the literal plane, but we wonder what profound metaphorical significance it is bringing to our attention. And since the saying "All promises are either broken or kept" is on the face of it a truism, what esoteric and novel truth must surely be concealed beneath?**

At times one begins to suspect that a number of proverbial sayings had their origin in some ancient equivalent of the *New Statesman* Weekend Competition.

There is a Scottish proverb which has it that "A white wall is a fool's paper." Graffiti are more often than not the work of fools or worse, and I don't wish to encourage the recent tendency to pass them off as not merely another form of folk wisdom and wit but an art form comparable in its achievements to the writings of Shakespeare or Milton—though I can see a superficial resemblance to the genre of painting called by the Japanese "shunga" (a nice euphemism, that: literally it means "art in season").

I shall therefore quote only the two which stick in my mind. The first of these I found staring me in the face in a gents' urinal, and (I would venture) it strikes too sombre a chord to be called indecent: "The future of England lies in your hands." The second is well-known, even hackneyed, but such is its resonance that I shall cite it all the same. "God is dead: signed *Nietzsche", with below it, in another hand, a second inscription: "Nietzsche is dead:* signed *God." We know that Nietzsche is dead, and God may well have the last word, after all.*

I WAS HOPING **that this digression into the wisdom of the wall would take up the remainder of my space and thus furnish me with an honourable excuse for not mentioning a certain other proverbial saying. Alas it hasn't, and so I must. This one runs: "Wise men make proverbs and fools repeat them."**

D. J. Enright

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paraphrases were accurate, no real damage had been done. Responding to this position, I remarked in my essay, "The question is not whether these passages are accurately paraphrased in the versions given by Fleming and Warburg." (This is Chomsky's view of the matter.) I then went on to state as my own view that the question was "rather whether they are so patently and precisely equivalent that no man of sense would care whether he had read the original or the paraphrase." Unbelievably, Professor Chomsky seems to believe that this statement of my position was somehow attributed to him, and he calls the alleged attribution "pure fabrication."

As Professor Chomsky notes, the error was corrected in the second edition of *APNM*; but it is important also to note *how* it was corrected. One would expect that if Professor Chomsky regarded the paraphrases as in fact the equivalent of the original, and had been criticised for having used the paraphrases, nothing would have been easier (and more confounding to his critics) than to have retained his argument but to have substituted the original statements for the paraphrases. He did not do this. Rather, he simply removed the quotation marks from the paraphrased text! His behaviour in the matter requires us to believe one of two things: either he does in fact believe that the originals and the paraphrases are precisely equivalent, or he believes that his argument cannot be sustained except by the substitution of paraphrases.

What sort of history is it that works better with paraphrases than with originals?

6. It should not be thought that these instances I have been discussing are isolated examples in Professor Chomsky's political journalism. In the preface to his recent *Reasons of State* he compares the North Vietnamese army to the Anglo-American army that invaded France in 1944. Whether or not this comparison implies an accurate understanding of the army of North Viet Nam, his understanding of the Normandy invasion is at best bizarre, for he tells us that the allies were bent on "conquering" France. By contrast, he tells us, the North Vietnamese cannot be proven to desire conquest of the South. There is certainly no commonly held meaning of the verb *to conquer* that can be applied to the object of the Normandy invasion. Does Professor Chomsky also believe that the allies, once they had completed their "conquest" of France, proceeded to annex it? Such a belief would do hardly less violence to the truth than his account of the invasion itself. This is the sort of historical distortion—whether proceeding from slovenliness or deliberation I cannot tell—that disfigures much of Professor Chomsky's journalism.

7. Finally, if Professor Chomsky has in fact "many fully documented cases of purging of left-wing faculty members", then he should share them with his readers. Until he does, the charge is no more than a charge, and no more substantial than much of what Professor Chomsky writes on politics. It must be a matter of regret that a linguist of Professor Chomsky's extraordinary ability should occupy so much of his time with third-rate political journalism.

If Professor Chomsky's journalism were clearly distinguished as such, as such it could be judged. But it is journalism tricked out with many of the customary appurtenances of scholarship, including copious documentation. In this it resembles the work of right-wing publicists who confuse ideological pamphleteering with scholarship. A text that is essentially ideological polemic is underpinned by a vast critical apparatus. Few of the notes, when examined, turn out to cite original sources. Rather, they cite quotations of other polemicists quoting other polemicists quoting a snippet or a paraphrase of the original. In the absence of any confrontation between scholar and evidence, there is a manipulation of secondary report so removed from context and analysis that anything can be "proved" by it. In his close approximation of this technique, Professor Chomsky demonstrates one more evidence that the New Left resembles nothing so much as the Old Right.

President, JOHN R. SILBER
Boston University

Dr Heinz Kiosk

READERS MAY BE puzzled by the lack of wit in Peter Simple's profile of myself in the May ENCOUNTER. May I refer them to my monograph, *The Bastard Heirs of Voltaire*, an analysis of Hans Einfach, a hack columnist in Hugenberg's conservative press in the 1920s. The equally ponderous humour relied also on the funniness of foreigners. But Einfach's main appeal I concluded, was to anxious conservative readers who would laugh at anything which reassured them that new ideas were not a real threat. When I came to England I discovered that your *Punch* magazine of the same period achieved a similar success with jokes about that threatening phenomenon, the independence of servants, the newly rich, and the working classes. It is also of interest that M. Brezhnev's recent absence was due to a rupture, incurred while laughing at a Profile of Sakharov (by Ivan Simplovich), in the Kremlin house journal.

HEINZ KIOSK
Billingshurst, (signed in his absence)
Sussex MICHAEL GORDON

Marxian "Racism"?

TO ARGUE that Karl Marx ranged himself with the anti-Semites is true up to a point but requires a more dialectical analysis than that given by Chaloner and Henderson in ENCOUNTER (July 1975).

Certainly, the young Marx regarded Jewish money-making as the embodiment of commercial capitalism in 1844–5, but he increasingly abandoned the atavistic terminology of *Zur Judenfrage* as his understanding of political economy developed. His pseudo-solution to the Jewish question certainly had nothing in common with Adolf Hitler. His dislike, even contempt, for Jews did not for one moment entail their physical elimination by violent methods nor did it necessarily imply the more subtle persecution practised today in Soviet Russia. One cannot in my view reasonably argue that anti-Semitism was an integral part of Marx's outlook—though I fully agree with Chaloner and Henderson that this problem has been glossed over by most socialist commentators.

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Life & Letters Today

London

SUCH LENGVICH: Some international computer language from a Nixdorf brochure in German—"Das Hardware-System . . . Das Software-System . . . Das Knowhow der Nixdorf-Teams . . . Floppy-Disk. . . ."

THE TIMES

London

CLICHÉS: *Regularly on the "Daily Mirror's" notice board is the editor's bulletin—Michael Christiansen's reflections on the day's performance. He borrowed the idea from his father who introduced it to Fleet Street during his 24-year term as editor of the "Daily Express." Only occasionally did it reach the sort of eloquence which passed into folklore: Imploring the staff to "avoid clichés like the plague."*

EVENING STANDARD

London

MARKSISM: A few weeks ago we reported the result of some interviews we conducted, suggesting that people did not read or listen to the news much. It was just after the Mozambique demonstrations and we asked them what the name Lourenco Marques meant to them. One respondent thought it was one of the Marx brothers.

This seminal piece of research has been reprinted in *Za Rubezhom*, a weekly bulletin published in Moscow containing significant extracts from foreign newspapers. To help readers understand the story, *Za Rubezhom* explains that Marx Brothers is "one of London's largest department store chains".

THE TIMES

Wellfleet, Mass.

WILSON'S WAR: *One stout fighter against the permissive attitude was the late Edmund Wilson, who never doubted that it was his duty to complain of any new abuse of language that came to his notice. He unsuccessfully opposed the American usage of "based upon"—"all ambassadors," said President Kennedy, "would be chosen, based upon their skill and ability." This is now current usage. Other words he found in constant misuse were "crucial," "kudos," "jejune," "protagonist," "massive," "saga," "transpire," "tribute," and "vintage." He might have added "cohort," which in American English now irredeemably means "henchman," the Roman sense of "company, or band of soldiers" being now entirely lost to most of the world's English speakers.*

DAILY TELEGRAPH

London

LET THEM EAT PROGRESS: "But there are a few signs of hope! It is encouraging that the Ethiopian famine brought about the end of *that* ridiculous régime" (from an article on "the problem of world poverty", by the Rev. David L. Edwards, Canon of Westminster).

CHURCH TIMES

London

RHETORIC: The fatuity of President Ford's pronouncement [Alfred Friendly writes] that he "would rather travel thousands of miles for peace than take a single step towards war" is best appreciated by recalling a comment of Mark Twain, which should have forever buried that kind of thunderous imbecility: "I would rather go to bed with Lillian Russell stark naked than with Ulysses S. Grant in full military regalia."

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE

Copenhagen

SLANDER: *Mr Anker Joergensen, the Danish Prime Minister, has been found guilty of slander after saying at a political rally that a right-wing Danish weekly newspaper,* Minut, *was an expression of "the darkest fascism imaginable".*

Mr Hans Hetler, the editor of Minut, *who conducted his own case, said that the remarks went far beyond what could be considered reasonable comment about a political opponent.*

The Prime Minister said he felt that, on the contrary, he had spoken with great moderation, and pleaded not guilty.

The court said that the term fascist could be used only if it could be proved that the person concerned sought to promote a dictatorship similar to those in Germany and Italy before the Second World War.

THE TIMES

London

PUN: One London wit last night ended all conversation in reply to a remark made by someone just back from Paris. "It's incredible, the Left Bank seems to be full of nothing but dress shops now."

"Yes", quoth my friend, "There's many a slip twixt Coupole and Lipp."

EVENING STANDARD

London

EPITHETS: *Though the Speaker ruled on Wednesday that "lie" is an un-Parliamentary expression (and even young Winston Churchill's retreat to "terminological inexactitude" was disallowed) this is pretty mild compared with some of the things said in other Commonwealth assemblies.*

Each year, the Society of Clerks at the Table of Commonwealth Parliaments set out the words and phrases disallowed during the previous 12 months, and the latest list makes fascinating reading.

India, for example, ruled out "blackmailer", "idiot" and "hypocrite". Australia rejected "dictator" and "donkey". In Zambia "something wrong upstairs in our brains" was declared un-Parliamentary.

In New Zealand, the description "like a lot of screaming baboons" had to be withdrawn, but Members there still seemed to get away with quite a lot. Expressions that were allowed are "jackboot tactics", "rural rump" and "sanctimonious humbug."

DAILY TELEGRAPH

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Personally, I think that Marx's anti-Semitism was the product of a specifically Jewish self-hatred, a phenomenon which I have analysed in detail in a book to be published by Harrap next May, entitled *Revolutionary Jews and anti-Semitism.*

This leads me to my second point, namely that Engels as a Gentile was altogether free of this "Jewish" complex, though as Chaloner and Henderson rightly mention, there are plenty of anti-Semitically tinged references in Engels' correspondence. What they do not sufficiently point out is that after 1878 Engels (at least in public) decisively repudiated the anti-Jewish tendencies of his younger days.

Marx and Engels' hostile attitude to the South Slavs should not be equated with "the true spirit of Pan-Germanism" or even with Slavophobia. What was decisive here was their concept of revolutionary strategy and social progress in the pan-European context of 1848–9. They regarded the Czechs and South Slavs as "counter-revolutionary" because at that time they believed that a war-to-the-death against the Tsarist bastion of reaction was indispensable for European emancipation. The weakness in Engels' position lay not so much in his alleged "Pan-Germanism", but in his thoroughly misleading concept of "historyless peoples." Engels wrongly thought that "barbarian" peasant nations would inevitably be assimilated by their stronger industrial neighbours, and that this process was not only historically progressive but positively desirable. The source of this misconception did not lie in "racism", but in Engels' reliance on a pseudo-historicist theory derived from Hegel's metaphysics. It was Hegel who first put forward the notion that peoples allegedly incapable of creating a State (*e.g.* the South Slavs, Bulgarians, Serbs, *et al.*) were condemned by historical development to disappear.

I must also point out two errors in the text. Karl Kautsky, contrary to a curiously tenacious myth, was a Catholic of mixed German-Czech parentage and not a Jew. Alfred Adler, the famous psychologist, was not a party colleague of Engels—the reference here must surely be to Victor Adler, leader of the pre-1914 Austrian Social-Democracy.

In spite of these criticisms, I think that Chaloner and Henderson are fundamentally right to expose the sins of omission practised by many Western scholars in relation to the subjective prejudices of Marx and Engels.

ROBERT S. WISTRICH

The Institute of Contemporary History, London

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Malcolm Bradbury is Professor of American Literature at the University of East Anglia. His essays on the state of the Novel, *Possibilities*, were published by Oxford University Press in 1973; he is the author of *Eating People is Wrong* and *Stepping Westward*, and his new novel, *The History Man*, will shortly be published by Secker & Warburg.

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WE REGRET that in **Raymond Aron's** "A Reply to Solzhenitsyn" (September) a misprint in the original led to a mistranslation in the English. The sentence on p. 60, col. 2, line 17 ff. should have read: "And it [the West] will only survive . . . by listening to the admonitions, however unjust, of those who are or believe themselves to be the 'wretched of the earth'. . . ."

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS has asked us to explain that the original copyright to Professor **Alasdair MacIntyre's** paper in the July ENCOUNTER is held by the D. Reidel Publishing Company and it has now been published in the first volume of "Evaluation and Explanation in the Biomedical Sciences", edited by Engelhardt and Spicker (Dordrecht, 1974).

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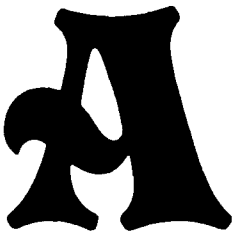

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Bryan Magee, *Sunday Times*

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